

# BLACKMAIL OR WAR

BY

GENEVIÈVE TABOIS

*(Translated from the French by Paul Selver)*

WITH THIRTY-NINE DRAWINGS BY  
JOE OF THE "STAR"

*Stark Edition*



PENGUIN BOOKS LIMITED

HAVERHAMPORTH WICKHAMPS, ENGLAND

First published JANUARY 1938  
Second Edition (with new footnotes) FEBRUARY 1938  
Third Edition (with revisions and new material) MARCH 1938  
Fourth Edition MAY 1938  
Fifth Edition OCTOBER 1938  
Sixth Edition (with revised chapter) DECEMBER 1938

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN FOR HODDER & STOUGHTON LIMITED,  
BY WYMAN AND BONE, LTD., LONDON, FALMOUTH AND BEACONSFIELD.

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS . . . . .	7
I. LOST HORIZONS . . . . .	11
"II. THE IMPERIAL DREAM . . . . .	46
III. "DOWN WITH TRADITIONS!" . . . . .	79
IV. RISE AND FALL OF A DEMOCRACY . . . . .	114
V. ATTACHMENTS TO BEWARE OF . . . . .	143
VI. "ALLIANCES ARE MADE ONLY WITH A VIEW TO FIGHTING" . . . . .	163
VII. BEHIND THE FAÇADE . . . . .	189
VIII. WAR OR PEACE? ( <i>revised November 1938</i> ) . . . . .	237

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE		PAGE
LEOYD-GEORGE . . . . .	19	EDEN . . . . .	121
HERRIOT . . . . .	21	HITLER . . . . .	124
IRIN . . . . .	24	SCHMIDT . . . . .	127
FOURTH . . . . .	31	PAUL-BONDOUR . . . . .	129
BENIŠ . . . . .	34	SARRAUT . . . . .	132
SMOY . . . . .	36	HALLPAX . . . . .	135
ALCOY . . . . .	38	VAN ZOELAND . . . . .	140
BALDWIN . . . . .	41	NEUBATH . . . . .	146
MUSKOLINE . . . . .	47	SUTYCE . . . . .	149
GRANDI . . . . .	59	SCHUSCHINGO . . . . .	153
LYVAL . . . . .	71	CLANO . . . . .	155
BALBO . . . . .	75	RENNETGE . . . . .	161
TITULACU . . . . .	88	FRANCO . . . . .	172
STALIN . . . . .	92	BLUM . . . . .	176
LITVINOFF . . . . .	94	BREYU ARAS . . . . .	178
GOERING . . . . .	96	DOCK . . . . .	185
BOERS . . . . .	103	BLOWBERG . . . . .	202
HALE SOLARIS . . . . .	112	CHAMBERLAIN . . . . .	240
FLANDIN . . . . .	115	RODMILT . . . . .	242
FRANÇOIS-PONCET . . . . .	117		

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

WHEN Mussolini and Hitler met at Berlin<sup>1</sup> on September 25th, 1937, the task before them was to establish a joint policy. The Mediterranean problem was then in the foreground of events. If Italy followed up her advantages there with the connivance and help of Germany, the latter country would be entitled to assume that fresh possibilities would be placed at her disposal in Central Europe.

"If we back each other up, if we share zones of influence between us, if we gamble with the weaknesses and fears of the democracies by holding our united forces as a threat above their heads, both of us can secure substantial advantages without risking the outbreak of a general war which we could not keep going for any length of time. . . . What Paris and London fear more than anything else is a war. They are not properly armed; we are still far away from the critical breaking-point to which our policy of blackmail, with the threat of war behind it, would ultimately lead."

Such was the general purport of the talks between the Führer and the Duce. And why not? Italy had already seen during her Ethiopian adventure how prone the democracies were to yield to blackmail of that kind. A year later, on March 7th, 1935, Germany received confirmation of it when, regardless of the Peace Treaties, regardless of the commitments which she freely entered into at Locarno, regardless of the concessions which had been made to her since the signature of the Peace Treaties, she

decided upon the re-militarization of the Rhine area without any kind of preliminary negotiation. Japan had set them both an example of these methods in 1932. All these victories were gained without any risk, without any fighting, under the very noses of the poor old democracies.

Perhaps war does not pay, but blackmail, based on the threat of war, certainly did. Encouraged by this discovery, the shameless greed of the totalitarian Governments will go on increasing daily, as long as the public opinion in the democratic countries does not come to its senses and insist that firm and united counter-measures must be adopted.

Public opinion in Great Britain and France, in the face of this blackmail on the part of Italy and Germany, has shown a disposition to make compromises, if not to let matters slide. The attitude is much the same in both countries, but the reasons for it are quite different. In France, war is not feared, but hated. Public opinion takes the point of view that war, which may perhaps be inevitable, would involve the utter ruin of our civilization. Hence what must be done at any cost is to gain time by favouring every possible concession. At all events, before taking the fatal step which would result in a ghastly conflict, the government must convince the French people that every attempt had been made to avoid war. If, however, war should come, there is not a Frenchman, whatever his political party may be, who would oppose a government which had made every effort to ward off the catastrophe. Once again the nation would rise as one man to defend French territory and French freedom.

If to-day, on the other hand, a Government

wished to foment events and bring force to bear upon the high-handed actions of Germany and Italy in the Mediterranean, France would be divided and the Government would be accused of serving the interests of the political parties or the countries with whose doctrines his opposition to the dictatorships would be interpreted as a proof of sympathy.

In Great Britain the blackmail exercised by Germany and Italy produces different effects. The profound belief in the strength of the British Empire which is cherished by every Englishman, whatever class he may belong to, convinces him that under no circumstances can anything ever happen to the Empire. No Englishman has the slightest doubt that all nonsense will stop as soon as Great Britain makes up her mind to stop it. Hence it is with a superior smile that the average Englishman watches Italy meddling on so many fronts at the same time.

Of course, Italy and Germany are bluffing. The danger is, however, that sooner or later the successes scored by Rome and Berlin as a result of their blackmailing methods will encourage one or other of the dictators, caught in his own trap, to gamble for the mastery of Europe by means of a stupendous war which, incidentally, would save him from his serious internal troubles.

The plans for such a war have been carefully prepared in accordance with all the aims both of the Wilhelmstrasse and the Chigi Palace. They are constantly being adapted to the changes brought about by the course of events.





## CHAPTER I

### LOST HORIZONS

THE Peace Treaties should have enabled Great Britain and France, the two countries pursuing a joint and active policy for the defence of these Treaties under the auspices of the League of Nations, to be the masters of war and peace in Europe for half a century at least.

Unfortunately, however, the ink on the documents which were exchanged was scarcely dry when the policy of co-operation within the League showed itself to be the cause of divergences between the two nations. Each of them reacted in accordance with its own particular psychology. In France it was expected that Geneva would produce fresh guarantees against the restoration of a powerful Germany, together with additional assurances for the security of the Rhine frontier.

In Great Britain it was hoped that the Covenant would mean the liberation from all commitments in Europe, a state of affairs which would have enabled the British Government to enjoy once again the benefits of settling the balance of European power.

The new implement for governing the world which had been shaped on the shores of Lake Lemán proved, from the very outset, to be an unwieldy one, precisely because of this divergency of views. M. Jules Cambon recorded that during the endless meetings which were concerned with the Treaty of Versailles there was "a certain inconsistency in what was expected from the League of

Nations. It was intended as a device for imposing peace on those who threatened to be unruly, and in order to achieve this, it was to watch over the maintenance of the European status quo; at the same time, it was regarded as a medium for promoting progress in accordance with the aspirations of the various peoples and the advance of democracy in the world."

"Man," he added, "has not changed as much as is supposed. He obeys the same instincts as he always did, and the League of Nations would come to grief if it presumed to thwart those movements which are nothing less than the outward sign of growth on the part of nations. The difficulty will always be to decide whether these ferments which, from time to time, disturb the face of the globe are a useless and sterile disturbance, or whether, on the contrary, they are the birth-pangs of something vital.

"Hence, the League of Nations will not be able to follow rigid ideas or dogmatic principles. As it is pursuing a political aim, it will have to maintain an attitude in accordance with the rules of politics. It will have to take hard facts into account; it will have to realize that the prime need of nations is to establish their security; thus, by the very nature of things, it will have to try and reconcile the new outlook, to which it owes its very existence, with the needs of the special agreements which nations may be induced to make among themselves."

In order to keep "the diplomatic whip-hand" the victorious nations had the choice of two methods: either to remain well armed, with the firm resolve to apply the rules of the Covenant of the League, and to make themselves respected,<sup>1</sup> by

force if need be, or else to disarm and by gradually toning down the Covenant and the Treaties to try and reach a working arrangement with the defeated nations who would be enabled, little by little, to resume their position in the world.

Great Britain and France failed to agree which of the two methods to adopt, and the result was that they tried both of them, too often, moreover, without co-ordinating their efforts. In this way they did not derive any of the advantages of either, and had to put up with the drawbacks of both, for they wasted their energies in attempting to reconcile conflicting issues.

The anomalies of this deplorable situation made it fair game for all those who were anxious to bring about treaty revision, and to weaken the Franco-British understanding. Laws can be enforced only when there is strength behind them, and this implies not only the possession of arms but the existence of unity. Unity, in its turn, involves an identity of aims.

From 1920 onwards, as M. Paul Reynaud aptly pointed out in his remarkable speech of December 25th, 1927, the British Government supposed itself to be in the same predicament as Pitt, faced by a Europe in which the power, the wealth and the population of France were such that, for England seeking the balance of power on the Continent, the only obvious source of danger was France.

After referring to the dreary sequence of lost chances, M. Reynaud added that Great Britain, anxious for the spirit of fair play in which she always treats the conquered, had over and over again in the post-war period urged the French Government to grant concessions to Germany.

In France Government followed Government, most of them belonging to the pre-war generations and still dominated by the fear of Germany.

The clash of interests which had revealed itself between the Allies during the Peace Treaty negotiations had been too often shirked, glossed over, or staved off, instead of being settled frankly. There was a nursing of grievances, a piling-up of grudges between nations who, now more than ever before, ought to have shown a united front towards the "revisionists" of their opponents which was bound to make its appearance.

It is only fair to say that Italian imperialism, with its approach first to Hungary and then to Germany, was engendered by the disappointments which the Italian people suffered as a result of the Treaties of Versailles and St. Germain—disappointments which were skilfully exploited and immoderately inflated by the Fascist tub-thumpers.

Signor Nitti, who was then Finance Minister, and who had been appointed together with Signor Orlando and Signor Sotgiu to represent his country at the Versailles Peace Treaty negotiations, resigned as soon as he discovered the underlying principles of the Treaty. He said quite frankly that he objected to the Treaty and to Italian membership of the League of Nations. This attitude gained him very wide popularity and led to his appointment as President of the Council in the following spring.

The Agreements of London in 1915 and of St. Jean de Maurienne in 1917 had indicated, although perhaps not as explicitly as might have been wished, the reward which Italy expected in return for having joined the Allies in the war.

Although Great Britain and France had not entered into any formal commitments towards Italy, she nevertheless was entitled to suppose that this reward comprised, first of all, the completion of Italian unity by linking together all the irredentist areas, next, complete control of the Adriatic and the grant of colonial mandates to facilitate her expansion in Asia Minor and Africa. Italy formed the opinion that Great Britain and France had not legally backed her efforts to achieve these "war aims".

In the Adriatic she had wanted Fiume, and had not obtained it; in respect of the irredentist areas she had to be satisfied with the Southern Tyrol and Istria; and she had to abandon her claim to Dalmatia, which was allotted to Yugoslavia and gave this latter country a predominant situation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

As regards her colonial ambitions, she had obtained only a slight increase of territory in Jubaland, adjacent to Italian Somaliland, as the result of a frontier readjustment agreed to by Great Britain. This dissatisfaction was not taken seriously enough by the Allies. It was looked upon with the same air of ironical scepticism as *d'Annunzio's* theatrical raid on Fiume.

It was then that in Poland Zeligowski took the high-handed course of seizing Vilna. The League of Nations ought to have asserted itself immediately and at that time it would have been an easy matter. Instead of that, however, the League merely let things slide. Incidents such as this, however trifling they may seem to us to-day, were the first indications that the Covenant was destined to fare very badly.

These two acts of defiance prepared the way for all the others; they helped to revive the idea that, in international relations, might is right; they supplied the best possible propaganda material to the Fascist movement in Italy and to the National Socialist movement in Germany.

When Mussolini came into power in 1922, he owed it to the public opinion, which had placed him where he was, to go one better than d'Annunzio. His chance to do so came in August, 1923, when the Italian General Tellini, who was working at the delimitation of the frontier in Albania, was murdered in rather mysterious circumstances on Greek territory.

Mussolini at once presented the Greek Government with an ultimatum and without waiting for a reply sent a squadron of Italian cruisers to Corfu, bombarded the harbour and invaded the town. The League of Nations was in session at Geneva and this incident caused consternation there. Italy, as far back as then, threatened to leave the League. This was blackmail based upon the threat of resignation, which later on was replaced by blackmail based upon the threat of war. Great Britain and France still hesitated to take any decisive action. The matter was referred back to the Ambassadors' Conference which was sitting at Paris under the Chairmanship of Jules Cambon.

M. Cambon on September 26th inflicted an indemnity of 50 million Lire on the Greek Government in return for which he obtained the evacuation of Corfu by Italy, and he expressed the opinion that this was not too high a price to pay for the peace of Europe and the peace of the World. No doubt the great Ambassador was right, but with

the 50 million Lira from the Greek Government the Duce had gained the assurance that the path was still open to war and to imperialistic aims, and that any power fully aware of its strength need not be put off by the "useless goings-on at Geneva" if it wanted to achieve its ambitions.

At a meeting of the Council of the League M. Hymans, the Belgian delegate, urged Signor Salandra to show a moderation which was more in accordance with the traditions of the Latin mind. Signor Salandra replied testily: "We have heard enough of these hackneyed references to Italy, the mother of the arts of poetry and civilization. All that is a thing of the past. You will now have to accustom yourself to an Italy tempered by warfare and firmly set upon the path of progress. It is a nation which must add to its possessions and make itself ready for the great future which is awaiting it."

As will be seen, the Fascist trend of thought was already making itself felt in Italy and pressing forward towards settlements by force of arms.

From that moment onwards, in order to promote the formation of a collective conscience favouring imperialism and war, Fascism not merely became the champion of violence, but was continually belittling the value of the treaties and the effectiveness of the League.

Although Italy continued to be represented at the League, the Fascist press did nothing but sneer at it and at the speeches delivered there. Mussolini always represented it, not only as useless and dangerous, but as a laughing stock. The Italian delegates at Geneva themselves made no secret of their scorn. Signor Coppola, among the first of them, to-day a member of the Italian Academy,

where he is supposed to represent "political thought", asserted that he did not regard himself as "a delegate of the League" but as "a delegate against the League".

A large number of special publications were, from this time onwards, published in Italy for the sole purpose of extolling and spreading an anti-democratic spirit among the masses. A periodical issued by the Fascist intellectuals bore the significant title of "Anti-Europe"; it tilted against the Europe which had been born from the Peace Treaties. At Geneva, until the entry of Germany into the League in 1936, Italy kept to herself; she made a show of keeping aloof from the other great powers in all fundamental questions; she hob-nobbed with all the "revisionists" and other mischief-makers.

France attached scarcely any importance to these tantrums. They were even smiled at, but nobody suspected the trouble that was in store for the world as the result of this systematic contamination of a whole people.

French diplomacy was entirely preoccupied by the recovery of German strength, by the continual demands of the Reich and by its systematic violation of the clauses of the Versailles Treaty. From 1920 until April 17th, 1934, France refused to consider making any concessions to Germany. She insisted that, as a preliminary condition for any such steps, Great Britain must undertake military commitments involving mutual aid. For a number of reasons Great Britain objected to this and considered that it ought to be possible to arrange compromises which would satisfy Germany while limiting her ambitions, thus making it unnecessary



for the British people to be tied to any military commitments which would be the starting-point for a ruinous process of rearmament.

From 1921 onwards, German diplomacy realized how much capital could be made of this divergency of views between London and Paris. The French



LLOYD GEORGE

Government, or rather certain of its members, of whom Aristide Briand had the biggest following, realized the danger. He saw the need for negotiating with Germany, but he saw also that it must be done in close co-operation with Great Britain so as to induce the latter country to join a pact of mutual security which would include Germany herself.

In 1912 Aristide Briand was Minister for Foreign Affairs and he agreed to meet Mr. Lloyd George and Herr Cuno at Cannes. The German Chancellor seemed ready to sign a pact of security, so that Great Britain would no longer have any reason to stand aloof. Nor was Mr. Lloyd George opposed to such a scheme.

While these meetings were in progress, Aristide Briand, although he never went in for outdoor sports, agreed to a suggestion made by Mr. Lloyd George and tried his hand at a game of golf. The cartoonists got wind of this and Briand became a joke. In France it is fatal for a statesman to become a joke, especially if the Government in power shows no great eagerness to interfere. M. Poincaré showed very little eagerness to interfere, for he was not at all easy in his mind as to what his Minister for Foreign Affairs might be up to next.

He suddenly recalled M. Briand from Cannes and elbowed him into a hasty resignation in the Chamber of Deputies. This was a new dodge in the political history of the Third Republic. Authors of reviews and singers of topical ditties made the most of it and went on doing so until Briand's death. The effects were soon felt on the European chess-board.

In Germany lamentations were increasingly heard that the Treaty of Versailles had reduced the Reich to such a plight that it could not pay its debts nor keep order at home with its 100,000 troops. This was blackmail, with the threat of war and revolution in the offing. At the same time the German Government drew closer to Russia with whom it concluded the memorable agreement of Rapallo.

In France, where public opinion was still obsessed

by the fear of Germany, the uneasiness grew worse and worse. M. Herriot, President of the Council in 1934, tried to find a remedy at Geneva. The failure of a limited pact led him to aim at a universal pact by which a single country, if it were unjustly attacked and the aggressor refused to agree



HERRIOT

to arbitration, could rely immediately upon the complete mobilization of all the others.

Great Britain kept to her traditional policy and showed reluctance to undertake commitments involving eventualities which were unspecified and could not be foreseen. She did not appreciate the

value of a universal pact until the aggressive action of Italy against Ethiopia, and by then it was too late.

Italy, for her part, became sarcastic. "Why, of course," said Signor Scialoja with delightful blandness, "we are in favour of arbitration, but we are also in favour of agreements which are so worded that, under certain circumstances, they allow of a certain elasticity of interpretation."

Signor Scialoja, with his tongue in his cheek, then went on to explain, emphasizing each word with gestures which were so typical of him, the "relativity" of commitments which might be undertaken. He even dropped a hint that Italy, dissatisfied with the Peace Treaties, foresaw the possibility of revising them otherwise than by "arbitration".

From then onwards the Italian delegates to the League went out of their way to act as spokesmen for the defeated countries, especially Austria and Hungary. In this way they caused their country's stock in Central Europe to show an upward tendency.

Briand, who was Minister for Foreign Affairs once more, was anxious to cope with this danger. In full agreement with Great Britain, he laid the foundations of the pact which was signed at Locarno and which made Great Britain, Germany and Italy jointly responsible for French security and the fulfilment of the Treaties.

Mussolini objected to the Locarno pact, just as he objected to every pact which might stabilize the existing state of affairs. It took all the adroitness and patience of Signor Scialoja and Signor Filotti, the finest legal mind in Italy, to secure his assent. Between them, they managed to convince the Duce that if Italy signed, she would become a surety for

France on the same footing as Great Britain, and thus her standing as a great power would be established. In pleasing contrast to Germany and France who were always causing trouble, Great Britain and Italy would co-operate in the maintenance of peace, and thus earn the approval of all the other nations.

As a finishing touch, in the following March Germany was admitted to the League of Nations. Everybody was pleased. They may not all have been prompted by the same sincerity and goodwill, but they all seemed glad that the international tension had been relaxed. There can be no doubt that this was the most satisfactory juncture in the post-war period. Sir Austen Chamberlain, M. Briand and Herr Stresemann clicked their glasses of champagne together and smilingly drank a toast to the future.

Unfortunately, if at Geneva the protocol was being elaborated in an atmosphere of goodwill, clouds were gathering in the Far East. The United States Government, uneasy at Japanese expansion in the Pacific, had rallied to the popular slogan "not another Japanese on American soil". They had denounced the gentleman's agreement which permitted "Japanese immigration to the territory of the United States". The Japanese sought in the East, in the direction of China, for compensations and facilities which they had not derived from the Peace Treaties. They took the view that their penetration in Asia was a matter affecting only their internal policy and in any case beyond the jurisdiction of the League.

When the Article of the Protocol came up for discussion at Geneva which established the con-

ditions for applying the mechanism of sanctions against any aggressor, that is, anyone who disturbed the situation created by the Peace Treaties, the Japanese delegates proposed an amendment



18113

which removed from the Council of the League all powers of decision if one of the members claimed that the conflict in question was of an internal character.

Their purpose was too obvious. There was a general outcry: "The Japanese are trying to rebel against the authority of the Council. Disgraceful!" Messrs. Adachi and Ishii, the Japanese delegates, came before a special court, the object of which was to smooth matters over, and which comprised MM. Briand, Paul-Boncour and Politis, Mr. Henderson, Lord Parmoor, Signor Scialoja and Dr. Benel. M. Briand opened the proceedings by asking the Japanese to explain what was at the back of their minds. In reply to this Viscount Ishii asked: "When you are ill, what do you do?"

"I send for a doctor," replied Briand.

"Exactly," continued Viscount Ishii, "but if you want to get better and he says he can do nothing for you what do you do then?"

"Well," answered Briand, "I would try a surgeon."

"Exactly," went on Viscount Ishii, "but if the surgeon says he can do nothing and that he cannot operate on you, what would you do then?"

As Briand said nothing, Viscount Ishii added in his tiny, high-pitched voice: "Why, you would commit *hara-kiri*."

On that day, Briand and those who were sharing his efforts realized that sooner or later the Japanese would confront the League of Nations with a new state of affairs such as would ensure for them their "free expansion in China".

Having realised this, the Western democracies ought to have kept a sharp look out, to have taken precautionary measures, or at least to have arranged some compromise which would have saved the face of the League. Nothing of the sort was attempted. Great Britain and France were equally at fault.

Europe's sole preoccupation was disarmament. The Weimar Republic which, encouraged by the indulgent attitude of America, was steadfastly pursuing a policy of evading reparations, regarded this problem of disarmament as the most favourable opportunity for separating British and French interests within the League. The Government of the Reich clamoured at Geneva more noisily each day for the application of Article 8 of the Covenant. This article provides for the disarmament of the victorious nations as soon as the defeated nations have been disarmed.

"We have disarmed," lamented the German delegates. "We have sacrificed all the obligations in the Treaty. It is for you now, French, British, Czechs, Yugoslavs, and so on, to sacrifice your armaments on the altar of peace."

The French Ministers declared that all this was quite untrue and that the Germans were rearming secretly. In the corridors of the League photographs were headed round showing the illicit armaments of Germany. There was also documentary evidence of the industrial concerns which, located in countries bordering on the Reich, were working under German control at the manufacture of war material on a large scale.

The British delegates who belonged to the Labour Party, maintained an air of unbelief, as they were anxious to justify the passive attitude which the economic situation in Great Britain made it necessary for them to adopt.

Italy, on her part, did not beat about the bush. She demanded naval equality with France to ensure her supremacy in the Mediterranean: she displayed a sullen enmity to the land armaments of France



who, in the newspapers of Rome, was denounced as "a country whose greed for conquest will never be satisfied".

This was turning the tables with a vengeance.

In December, 1930, the preparatory disarmament committee completed the draft of a convention which was to serve as a basis for the work of the Disarmament Conference.

Germany, acting as a stalking-horse for Italy, then asserted the principle that there should be an equality of rights for all nations, whether they had been on the winning or the losing side during the War. She made this principle an implement for systematic obstruction, and opposed the ratification of the findings of the preparatory committee. The speech of Count Bernstorff, the senior German delegate to this committee, clearly indicates the ulterior motives of the Weimar Republic which felt its existence threatened by the National Socialist Party's bids for power. He said: "We demand equality of rights; we have been unjustly treated. France has kept all her military resources, Great Britain all her naval resources. We cannot go on urging our claim like this." He even added a remark which the secretariat of the League primly omitted from its reports: "Yes, gentlemen, we cannot go on arguing in this useless manner. Germany invites you to meet her at Philippi."

While Europe floundered amid these discussions which were spitting public opinion, Japan improved the shining hour by planning the scope of her expansion in the Far East. At the end of 1931, under the pretext that brigandage was spreading in China to the detriment of Japanese trade, she

made preparations for the conquest of Manchuria. Apart from its economic benefits, this vast area, being thrust like a wedge between Russia and China, would be particularly useful to Japan as a base for subsequent operations.

The League had to face its responsibilities. For the first time one of its members, a great Power, too, in defiance of the international law to which it had subscribed, was deliberately attacking another great Power, also a member of the League, which appealed for the full measure of support provided in the Covenant.

In France the significance of the conflict, owing to its remoteness, was not realized. Eyes were turned towards Great Britain whose interests seemed to be more directly involved.

The Foreign Office did not venture to challenge Japan, as it did not feel that it was ready to take appropriate action. After the war Great Britain sacrificed the Japanese alliance to a naval agreement with the United States at the Washington Conference. At Washington the danger was realized, and the American Government offered to support Great Britain in various measures which, without preventing Japanese expansion in the north of China, would at least keep it within reasonable bounds, and make Japan understand that she could not do as she pleased in the Far East. This was an unexpected chance for Great Britain and incidentally for the League as well, to bring the United States into closer touch. Among the lost opportunities in the post-war period, this one must be placed in the forefront.

The League then had recourse to standing orders, endeavouring in this way to conceal the impotence

to which it was reduced by its internal disagreements. The Lytton commission was sent to China in the secret hope that it would put a stop to the new outbreaks of brigandage which had provided the Japanese with an excuse for their aggressive action.

The extraordinary assembly of the League in March, 1932, produced some startling outbursts. After all, there were limits to international cowardice and protest, and Japan had to be censured. Thereupon Japan announced that she would walk out of the League.

It is impossible to gauge the full effects of such renunciation on the part of the great democracies. The arguments against the League, however, which certain parties of the Right have drawn from it are quite unjustified. What was then demonstrated in the eyes of the whole world was not that the League could not safeguard international order and hence peace. The application of the economic and financial measures provided for in the Covenant would assuredly have brought Japan to heel. The small nations, however, were provided with evidence that the great democracies, such as the United States, Great Britain and France, were reluctant to make use of the rights which the Covenant vested in them for the purpose of safeguarding their interests, and that from their point of view international morality was on a sliding scale, as it varied with the risks entailed by its commitments and its sanctions.

Disarmament soon loomed large again at Geneva. Owing to the divergency of views between Great Britain and France, German obstruction and the backstairs antagonism of Italy, the preparatory

committee of the Conference had been unable to reach any conclusion.

Following this setback, the Powers had exchanged views on the matter, and they ascertained only that it was a matter which caused a deep cleavage in the public opinion of every country.

At the first meeting of the Disarmament Conference in February, 1933, each member accordingly occupied the same position as in the previous year, *viz.* : the French firmly determined not to sacrifice a man or a ship without obtaining fresh guarantees of security ; the Italians determined to demand naval equality with France ; the British determined not to reduce their navy but to insist upon the reduction of the armies in other countries ; and the Germans determined more than ever to demand equality of rights.

At the opening of the Conference, those who had their eyes to the ground at Geneva (M. Politis was the chief among them) reported that a clear majority had been established in favour of the German claim to equality of rights, and also that many countries were at variance as to how this equality could be achieved.

M. Politis mentioned this to a French minister who, at various times, presided over the destinies of France. Whereupon the Frenchman, between two puffs at a cigarette, informed M. Politis that the claim to equality of rights was " all bunkum ".

The debates were distressing. Nevertheless, when M. Herriot returned to power in 1932 it was found possible to get the Conference to tackle the Herriot-Boncour scheme. It was only a compromise, ensuring, as it did, an equality of rights for Germany with regard to armaments, on condition that a higher standard of security were established in Europe.



POLITE

The essentials of French traditional policy were safeguarded: security first and foremost.

Unfortunately, European confidence in the League had already been impaired to a serious extent. Doubts had arisen whether it would be able to insist on the fulfilment of the preliminary conditions for security, and there was a feeling that the concession which had to be made to Germany would remain a one-sided bargain. The rearmament of Germany immediately assumed such proportions as to cause widespread alarm and to alarm public opinion everywhere.

With an appalling inconsistency, the French parliament decided at this very juncture to give up the idea of trying to obtain American co-operation in the quest for peace and security at Geneva.

The French who, according to M. Herriot, "are unaware of any medium between equality and heroic effort", calmly declined to fulfil their commitments to pay what they owed to the United States, in spite of several reminders from Washington. "At this moment, when the dictatorial system of government is spreading, will you, for the sake of 480 millions, render of no avail the stand made by the free countries against the dictatorships?" asked M. Herriot in the Chamber, a few seconds before the vote which caused his ministry to fall.

Accordingly, when Chancellor Adolf Hitler came into power on January 30th, 1933, he found that the League which stood in the way of his ambitions was a weakened organization, with only divided and wavering democracies behind it.

The new Chancellor's programme was a marvellous affair. At the time it looked like something

hatched from the brain of a Wells-cum-dabbler-in-diplomacy. In the name of "racial science", which is simply imperialism in a new guise, he demanded that 100 million persons of German race and culture who are scattered throughout the world should be united within the Reich, which, he insisted, was entitled to them, and there could be no peace in Europe until this demand had been satisfied.

At first nobody felt inclined to attach much importance to this claim, which, however, in Hitler's subsequent flights of oratory became so much of a categorical imperative that signs of alarm began to display themselves here and there.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald who then presided over the destinies of Great Britain, fancied that an attempt ought to be made to stop the totalitarian countries from going too far by roping in their dictatorships as an integral part of some body with restricted powers. This scheme, which foreshadowed the Pact of Four, caused further trouble. All the lesser Powers saw themselves deliberately cut off from the approach to important international problems, and they had reasons for thinking that the "Big Four" would arrange always to put the blame on them whenever things went wrong.

The scheme fell through, but it left deep if secret misgivings among these "lesser nations", who were the traditional friends of France. Led by such men as Beneš, Titulescu and Politis these nations thereupon concluded a series of mutual assistance pacts under the patronage of France and within the framework of the League. The first of these pacts was the Little Entente, by which Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Roumania joined forces for a joint defence policy.

In the course of the summer the British ministers also began to feel rather uneasy. The organization of security seemed to them increasingly shaky. Disarmament had proved to be impossible. Ger-



BENED

many's demands continued to become more sweeping and also less compatible with her needs. Italy seemed to be more unreliable than ever. In October 1933 it was decided to summon once again the bureau of the Disarmament Conference.



As a last resort the Herriot-Boncour scheme was modified. These modifications, based on the principle of recognizing German equality of rights, granted the Germans far-reaching benefits, but stipulated that, before the equality of rights could operate, there would have to be a strict control of armaments. This made the Germans fear that the vast scale of rearmament on which they had been engaged since 1936 would now be disclosed. The results of such a revelation would have been so serious that Hitler saw nothing for it but to leave the Disarmament Conference and also the League. He probably felt that he might as well go the whole hog and damn the consequences.

On the morning of September 12th the League received an extremely impudent telegram signed by von Neurath. According to this telegram, it had been made abundantly clear that the Disarmament Conference would not carry out its only task, which was to bring about general disarmament. It was likewise clear that this setback to the Conference could be ascribed solely to the fact that the Great Powers who were armed did not wish to fulfil their contractual commitment to disarm. Hence it had become impossible to put into effect the equality of rights for Germany, the principle of which had been recognized. The condition under which the German Government had agreed to take part in the work of the Conference no longer held good. Accordingly, the German Government was obliged to leave the Disarmament Conference.

Rome expressed approval of this "forceful" manoeuvre and thus gave its own game away. A message issued by the Stefani agency, an official concern, openly backed Germany and associated



SEMPER

itself with the German point of view. At three o'clock in the afternoon, a meeting of the delegates of the Great Powers was held at the Hôtel de la Paix in Geneva, to discuss what reply should be made to Germany.

M. Politis, vice-president of the Disarmament Conference, drew the attention of Sir John Simon, the British Foreign Secretary, to the discourteous tone of von Neurath's reply. Dr. Bessel seconded this by urging that nobody seemed to realize that von Neurath's telegram was an insult to the British and French Governments.

Sir John Simon, looking very pale, agreed that a question involving self-respect had arisen and that a firm reply was essential.

The debate followed familiar lines. The Italian delegate, Signor Aloisi, urged with a honeyed sneer the need for being master-of-fact and making the best of things. Mr. Norman Davis, the United States delegate, expressed the view that they must be most careful not to arouse ill-feeling. Germany would, sooner or later, see the error of her ways and return to the Conference. A sub-committee, consisting of Sir John Simon, M. Paul-Boncour and Mr. Norman Davis, was then formed to draw up a reply. The draft which they submitted for ratification by the Committee was firm, without being aggressive. Nevertheless, all the members of the Committee wanted to have the wording toned down in various ways, so as not to offend Germany. Force had reasserted itself as the supreme factor in international relations. A general war seemed to be the only possible outcome of the German demands.

The instant that Great Britain and France were no longer inclined to meet these demands with a



ALCIDE

united front and adequate armaments, it seemed obvious that the wisest policy for the lesser nations was to draw closer to Berlin and to show an obsequiousness towards the demands of the Reich which would mean a guarantee of security.

The reply which was agreed upon under these conditions turned out to be so non-committal and colourless that it seemed hardly more than a message expressing the eagerness of all the nations to drop the subject of Germany's misdeeds so as to make it easier for her to return to Geneva. As M. Politis put it: "We saved our faces instead of launching a counter-attack."

The policy of blackmail which uses war as a threat answered its purpose without a hitch. Hitler bore this in mind; so did the Duce. They could now disturb Europe at their own sweet will and free their countries from all commitments which they had undertaken. On the ruins of the 1918 treaties they could achieve victories by means of "racial science" and "fascism". The democracies would take it lying down. And indeed, all that the democracies now aimed at was to negotiate an arrangement with the Germans to legalize their armaments and to let them continue their old tricks by "valorizing" their diplomatic action.

Hitler adroitly handled the trump cards which his "opponents" had dealt him. In a flamboyant speech he made a proposal of new foundations for European peace. He offered twenty-five years' of peace in exchange for an army of 300,000 men for Germany, and the conclusion of security pacts which were not to be unilateral, but bilateral and with restricted aims. It was easy to see through this. The lesser nations were to be isolated and

induced to regard their future as depending upon their powerful neighbours. Considered in retrospect, this speech now reveals itself as a critical turning-point in international relations.

Public opinion in Great Britain thought that here at last was the chance of an agreement with Germany. The British Government was therefore expected to negotiate on the basis of the proposals made by Chancellor Hitler. Paris had no option but to join in these negotiations, however suspect the German aims might seem. Any other policy would have involved the risk of separating British and French interests.

In the early part of January, 1934, Sir John Simon proceeded to Berlin in the hope of bringing about a political and military agreement. He came back without his illusions and with the conviction that no settlement would mean anything to Germany which did not entail her release, step by step, from the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. The Anglo-German naval agreement which was concluded shortly afterwards, unknown to the Quai d'Orsay, made this abundantly clear, and induced Great Britain once more to draw nearer to France. In a memorable speech Mr. Stanley Baldwin declared to the House of Commons: "Our frontier is on the Rhine."

A startling piece of news upset the world of diplomacy on January 26th, 1934. Poland, disappointed by the Locarno Pact, in which France, leaving her Ally in the lurch, had negotiated for security on the Rhine, without supplementing it by security on the Vistula, disappointed also by the Pact of Four, by which she considered herself classified among the lesser nations, signed the German-Polish pact of friendship.

The precise scope of this diplomatic document is still a matter for conjecture. In any case, since it was signed, Poland, although not repudiating her treaty of alliance with France, which enables her to levy permanent blackmail on Berlin, has dissociated herself from the policy of collective security pursued at Geneva by Great Britain and France. She also shows open hostility towards



BALDWIN

Czechoslovakia and casts longing glances in the direction of Rome. This policy is pursued by Colonel Beck with unblushing effrontery.

In France the parties of the Right engineered a disastrous ~~series~~ <sup>swarm</sup> of opinion which, on February 6th, led to serious street disturbances and overthrow the Daladier cabinet. M. Gaston Doumergue, the former President of the Republic, was recalled from

his retirement in the country to take over the Presidency of the Council and to form a cabinet of national unity. He entrusted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to M. Louis Barthou who, although turned 72 years of age, contrived to imbue the foreign policy of France with a spirit of recovery which, if it had not been continually thwarted by the parties of the Right, and then tragically brought to an end, would beyond any doubt have changed the course of events by restoring the united front of the democracies.

M. Barthou's first case was to answer the invitation which Chancellor Hitler had issued with a great flourish of trumpets. Was France to do as Great Britain wished, and acknowledge Germany's right to an army of 300,000 men? This arrangement, apparently, would then make it possible to negotiate with the Reich a new European peace organization, the details of which the Chancellor had been careful not to mention in his speech.

On April 15th, 1934, M. Barthou decreed the wording of the note which, before establishing any contact with Berlin, he made a point of addressing to the British Government for the purpose of settling the attitude he should adopt. In this note he expressed approval of an acceptance, subject to guarantees which were justified by the vagueness of the German invitation.

Nobody has ever discovered what happened between April 15th and April 17th, the date on which the note was sent. Over the debates which were to take place within the French cabinet on the subject of M. Barthou's wording broods a mystery which has never been solved. It is surmised that M. Doumergue, influenced by the parties of



the Right and especially by M. Tardieu, insisted that the note should be altered.

At all events, on April 17th, a note of refusal left the Quai d'Orsay for the Foreign Office, where this attitude on the part of France was regarded as the main cause of Hitler's subsequent demands, of the restoration of compulsory military service in Germany and of the failure of all the later talks with Berlin. British statesmen still say: "Ah, if you had agreed to the 300,000 men which Hitler asked for, we should not be burdened to-day with this armaments race which is ruining the whole of Europe, and you would not be faced by two million soldiers in Germany."

Personally, I think that the refusal with which France met the demands of Germany in 1934 could in no case have changed the racial doctrine, for the advance of which force is essential. All it did was to hasten events and to make Hitler drop his sham pacifism more quickly than he would otherwise have done.

At all events, the refusal caused a great commotion throughout Europe. It was interpreted as an act of firmness, showing that France was returning to her traditional policy within the framework of the League. In actual fact, there was nothing left for M. Barthou than, under the patronage of Great Britain, to try and find for France the guarantees in Eastern Europe which Great Britain refused to give her in any direct manner. It seemed to him that the time was ripe for negotiating a Franco-Russian mutual assistance pact.

Soviet Russia, fearing German designs in the Ukraine, which, according to what Hitler had said in "Mein Kampf", was a territory for the Germans

to colonize, wanted to share in the organization of collective security in Eastern and South Eastern Europe. She expressed her willingness to undertake commitments to this effect and to apply for admission to the League. If France with the help of Russia could arrange a network of pacts ensuring her full security against a renewal of Germany's "Drang nach Osten", she could turn towards Great Britain again, and this time in agreement with her, now that the British Government no longer had any misgivings as to the extent of their obligations abroad, she could invite Germany and Italy to co-operate in the organization of peace.

On the evening of April 18th M. Barthou was entertaining a friend of his, a foreign diplomat. This friend said to him: "The French note to Great Britain may have serious effects. It forces your country to be always on the alert." M. Barthou, his eyes alive with native mischief behind his placenet, answered:

"Believe me, that's a job I'm quite equal to."

A few months later, a tireless pilgrim in the interest of peace for France, he undertook a long journey in Central Europe and the Balkans to convey to all the nations which were allied with France or friendly towards her the greetings which they had not yet received from anyone of ministerial rank since the war. He was anxious, too, for this journey to show unmistakably that, in spite of the hints that were being heard in certain quarters, France was just as keen on peace and security in Eastern Europe as in the West, and that she regarded peace and security as being indivisible.

That was a remarkable journey and I shall remember it as long as I live. As a Frenchwoman

I could not help feeling touched when I saw the welcome which he received wherever he went. In Poland, in Roumania, in Yugoslavia and in Czechoslovakia, the crowds showed the same enthusiasm.

In the course of his stay at Warsaw, however, M. Barthou had a long talk with Marshal Pilsudski. The Marshal told him that the Polish Government would decline to have anything to do with an Eastern Locarno if Russia were to be included in it. M. Barthou showed no signs of alarm at this. He informed Marshal Pilsudski that he would nevertheless continue to pursue a policy which seemed to him the only one able to ensure a general peace in Europe and not coalitions of countries with special interests. The Marshal then asked him: "Do you think that you can maintain this policy in spite of the open hostility of Germany?" M. Barthou answered: "Why, of course. France, too, has a will of her own."

In the following September Soviet Russia became a member of the League. Her entry there aroused fresh hope that it might now be possible to conclude the general protocol of mutual assistance which had been so much talked about and which, by the membership of Soviet Russia, would acquire equal balance both in the East and in the West. In spite of the departure of Japan and Germany, and of the failures which the League had encountered in the past, the general opinion at the Assembly in 1934 was that it was still worth while to try and cope with German and Italian imperialism.

Both Rome and Berlin made no secret of their annoyance. Rome, however, pretended to bow to the inevitable, and was even discussing the possi-

bility of closer relations with Belgrade, when on October 9th, 1934, King Alexander of Yugoslavia and M. Barthou were struck down at Marseilles by the bullets of some terrorists who had been lying low on the other side of the Alps and in the mountainous districts of Hungary. This disaster might have had results as serious as those of the outrage at Sarajevo. If it had not occurred, if King Alexander and M. Barthou had escaped, there is every reason to suppose that neither Mussolini nor Hitler would, later on, have scored the successes which to-day make the future of peace in Europe so uncertain.

## CHAPTER II

### THE IMPERIAL DREAM

WHILE, at the Peace Conference in Paris, diplomats from all over the world were seriously endeavouring to reconstruct Europe, in Italy one of the most active members of the Italian Socialist Party, Benito Mussolini, director of the Italian newspaper "Avanti", was starting a national movement, the purpose of which was to restore Rome's ancient glory with the support of the masses rallied against the Italian monarchy and international capitalism.

In 1911, while Italy was busily pursuing the Libyan adventure, Mussolini defiantly adopted an anti-militarist and revolutionary attitude. In 1914, he instigated and encouraged "the Red Week", which was an attempt to mobilize the masses against capitalism. When the war broke out, he had nothing but sneers for the gallantry of Belgium and sang the praises of a neutrality which would be duly rewarded.

In 1915 he realized that Italy had more to gain on the Allied side, and accordingly he urged that Italy should join the Allies on the understanding that they paid in advance.



Mussolini is a perfect specimen of the *condottiero*. The province of Forlì in Romagna where he was born, has not produced many artists, scientists or politicians. On the other hand it was the birthplace

of such people as Malatesta, Ordassio and Manfredi, those professional adventurers whose exploits left a trail of blood behind them at the period of the Renaissance. In modern times Romagna is proud of its bandits and one of them, the famous Pasatore, was referred to by the great Italian poet Pascoli, as "monarch of highway and forest".

In October 1922, Mussolini decided that the time was ripe for him to act. Turning his back on his origins and his past record, he made up his mind that all he had to do, if he wanted to seize power, was to exploit the disappointments which the Treaty had caused the Italian people, and also the fear of the governing classes when confronted with the prospect of a Communist movement the origins of which, like those of the Commune of 1871 in France, can be traced to a nationalism which has been provoked beyond endurance.

He seized upon the idea of nationality for the benefit of his party. What does this idea of nationality consist of? It is the will to imperialism which has been taken over from the ancient Romans, and of which G. de Tardie has aptly remarked that it contains more ink than tradition, more bombast than conviction and more conceit than pride. Mussolini "marched on Rome", seized power with the financial and moral support of the big Italian industrialists, Federzoni, Coppola and Carradini.

Mussolini did not ask any of them to become his Prime Minister. All he did was to borrow their programme which was expounded day by day in the newspaper "L'Idée Nationale" and which involved the reconstruction of the "Roman Empire".

In his memoirs, Saint-Simon, a master of dry humour, referred as follows to the political changes

of face achieved by the Duke of Savoy: "The Duke of Savoy's situation was never the same in peace as it was in war, unless he had contrived to change round twice."

Mussolini's changes of face which have misled all the diplomats were always prompted by the same underlying purpose, viz., to enable Italy to secure the political and economic resources for re-establishing the Roman Empire.

The peninsula of Italy in the Mediterranean has no political future in the world brought into existence by the Peace Treaties, if she cannot use Spain as a prop, if she does not assert her power over the whole area which once was the Roman Empire.

Accordingly, sooner or later, this Italian imperialism was bound to clash with the democracies which had been its Allies during the War. As G. de Tarde says: "The nationalism to which the democracies gave birth came from the free nations; it founded Italy. Fascism which was born of coercion came from the slave peoples; the Italian nation has unwittingly fallen a prey to it."

In any case, Fascism, with its imperialistic cravings, runs counter, not to the other dictatorships, but to the democratic nations: France and England. The day will come when it will be prepared to work in unison with its former enemy Germany, against communism, which is democracy run mad.

At first this imperialism did not venture to trespass upon British interests, and schemed only against France. Ever since Fascism started, Nice, Savoy, Corsica and Tunis have had the same colouring in Italian phrases as Italian territory; they are "lands to be reclaimed".

On page 55 of the *Calendario Atlante de*

*Agostini* 1923 appears the following: "The natural region of Italy consists of the territories which, though situated within our natural frontiers, are not comprised within the limits of the Kingdom, i.e., the Republic of San Marino, the Principality of Monaco, Nice, Corsica and Malta." In the same way on page 33 of *L'Atto Geografico di Domenico Gramicciapanti* we read: "The Italian islands are Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica." Again on February 3rd, 1926, *L'Espresso* declared: "Either France foresees a war against Italy, in which case she will find it necessary to give up all or nearly all of her colonies, or else France will fight side by side with Italy, and then it is probable that in order to secure an alliance of our great country she will have to give up to us, beforehand and in a friendly spirit, a large part of her African and Asiatic possessions.

"... For a nation which is weak in man-power, and lacking in will and energy, the French Colonial Empire is too expensive a luxury." The same newspaper on April 4th, 1926, proceeded to enlarge upon this piece of effrontery, thus: "If we express freely what our frustrated desire for colonies amounts to, we will first of all point out that, as regards Africa, we ought to insist on more elbow room both right and left. Taking Tripoli as a pivotal centre, we must seize Tunis on one side and break off a small piece of Morocco on the other, without forgetting a little bit of Egypt, with a little bit of Nubia, as we reach our possessions on the Red Sea by way of the Nile. As regards Asia, we should not go far wrong if we asserted that the whole zone opposite the Dodecanese and Cyprus reaching from Smyrna to Antioch and even farther, comes within our purview."



In conclusion, it was amusing to read in *Il Lavoro d'Italia* which on May 13th (in the same year) wrote in all seriousness: "The North Pole ought to be Italian. Who has the political sovereignty over the Pole? For reasons of moral prestige the sovereignty of the zone in the Polar region ought to be bestowed on Italy."

The reason why Mussolini dodges so and fro so much in his foreign policy is because his purpose is to find an ally or rather an accomplice who, whether aware of it or not, would help him to realize his imperial dream, that copy of the Napoleonic dream, as newly formulated by Georges Sorel: to terrorize the world by perpetually levying blackmail on it, by threatening it with violence if it refuses to pay, thus compelling it to accept a political system of prestige and supremacy, the main features of which is to force the small nations, who are unable to put up any serious opposition, to become vassal states.

First of all, faithful to his revolutionary past and to the sympathies of his early days, he turned unhesitatingly towards the U.S.S.R. He took the view that Soviet Russia was the natural ally of Italy, an ally which would supply her, in particular, with the raw materials necessary for her development. At that period, Mussolini did all he could to be the first in the favours of the Moscow Government, towards whom the European nations as a whole showed considerable reserve. He did not venture, however, to take the initiative as regards recognition of Russia.

On January 22nd, 1934, the late Mr. Ramsey MacDonald anticipated him in this respect. Mussolini followed his lead on February 8th and managed

to get his representative to the Kremlin before the Ambassador of Great Britain reached there. The whole of the Italian press, which was already broken in, sang a hymn of praise to Moscow; with one accord it applauded the recovery scheme which was being carried on in Soviet Russia. It expressed its sympathy for the ideology of Lenin, the methods of which, during that period when the new Russia was being born, likewise involved a moral pressure and physical coercion, "a mechanical imperative", so to speak.

An agreement with Soviet Russia meant that Italy would be entirely independent of American capitalism, as regards the export of wheat, and of British finance as regards the import of coal.

Mussolini, as always, now recovered his assurance and began to waver. The chief value of an agreement, in his eyes, is that it can be repudiated, in return for more substantial advantages. The Western democracies, however, were proof against this attempt at blackmail; and so, in November 1930, M. Litvinoff, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, was invited to Milan, where with Mussolini he laid the foundations of a treaty which was signed nearly three years later, on September 2nd, 1933. This "Pact of Friendship, of Non-Aggression and of Neutrality" of Soviet Russia and Italy stipulated in its first article that the two contracting parties "undertake not to engage in a war or act of aggression, one against the other, either on land, or on sea, or in the air, under any circumstances, whether alone or in concert with other states".

The terms of Article 6 contained the following: "The high contracting parties undertake to submit to arbitration all questions arising between them

which could not be settled by the ordinary diplomatic channels." To put the finishing touch to this pact of friendship, Mussolini wrote a thinly anonymous article in the *Popolo d'Italia* in which he asserted: "Unshackled by hackneyed phraseology and protocols this treaty is one of the events which are bringing forth a new future. The two great revolutions, the Fascist and the Bolshevik, meet and join hands for the purpose of understanding each other, of working together and of bringing the other nations to their side. The two new Governments, placed between the past and the future, will settle probably, in agreement, the new aims of mankind." It will be seen how far Mussolini was at that time from believing in a "Marxist" danger. It was not until he felt the need for justifying what we propose to call his "Spanish adventure" that he invented it and, following the example of Germany, made it a slogan of his foreign policy.

As was only logical, from the beginning of his rule Mussolini never separated the idea of Fascism from that of war. One of the foundations of his régime is military preparedness. In an attempt to explain to his "public opinion" his blustering remarks about "dry powder" and "the sharpened edges of his axes" he said to his party as far back as October 24th, 1924: "Give me a free hand for five or ten years and Italy will be rich, happy and prosperous."

On May 3rd, 1927, without even proceeding to the Temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli, he declared that a world-wide conflict would break out in 1935 and urged the necessity for war. In 1935, a crucial year, Italy, he asserted with due emphasis, would have four million men under arms. She would have at

her disposal, the most formidable fleet in the world, and an air force so powerful that "the whirring of its motors would outpeer every other sound in the peninsula and the wings of its aircraft would darken the Italian sky".

From that day onwards all his efforts were directed to popularizing the idea of war, and for this purpose he made a special point of enrolling the young people who were still in their 'teens. He realized that the success of his blackmail would depend on the extent to which he could rely upon the support of a public opinion which was artificially stimulated so as to present to other nations the appearance of enthusiasm.

This blackmail, it may be noted, had to be kept going by a vast propaganda mechanism which did not hesitate to make itself felt by every possible means, including terrorism, espionage and bribery, in the political and economic life of other countries, the object being to try to undermine the moral forces in those countries, with an effrontery and a cynicism for which there is no precedent. This policy of bluff met with a stiff opposition and was an expensive business. On May 26th, 1934, speaking in the Chamber of Deputies, Mussolini had to recognize that Fascism lived only on debts and on future hopes. "We must," he said, "completely get rid of the idea that the time of what used to be called economic prosperity will ever return. We are approaching a period of humanity reduced to a much lower standard of living. This need cause us no distress, as the coming generations will be hardy, and plain living will suit them." To get ready for this "new humanity" which has been shaped by violence, he backed all those movements

which in Europe are directed against democracies and are a menace to peace. He flirted with Hungary whose revisionism seemed to him a valuable asset for promoting his blackmail. He encouraged Hitler's movement. We may here recall the wagon loads of Italian arms which were on their way to Bavaria and which were seized in Austria. As an example of the same attitude we may mention the broad-minded hospitality which was granted to the "Ustashi", whose disruptive movement in Yugoslavia led to the assassination of King Alexander I at Marseilles.

The conquest of Ethiopia, that cold-blooded scheme which revealed complete contempt for all international commitments and which was relentlessly carried out in defiance of the 52 members of the League of Nations, and finally the Spanish adventure constitutes the main manifestations of this "Roman imperialism".

Mussolini's plan is a simple one; it involves enforcing Italian supremacy in the Mediterranean. Such is the price of the security of the Empire and that is why he turned his attention to Spain at the western extremity of the Mediterranean. If, in agreement with the forces of Spain, Italy were to make sure of bases in the Balearic Islands, in the Canaries and in Peninsularia, she would consolidate her conquests of Libya, Tripoli and Ethiopia. She could thus hope to achieve domination of the Mediterranean. If, in addition, a European war were to handicap the movements of Great Britain and France, Italy would be able to cut off their communications in the Mediterranean and crown her imperial dream by uniting within her boundaries Libya, Egypt, the Sudan, Abyssinia, Tunisia, the Italian colonies of Somaliland and Eritrea, which

comprise an aggregate area of more than 1½ million square miles.

Even during the period of the Spanish Monarchy there had been a scheme for hegemony in the Mediterranean based upon co-operation between Italy and Spain. When on September 13th, 1922, Alfonso XIII had thrust Primo de Rivera into power, he and his "dictator" dreamt of founding a Latin Empire which would involve the union or the federation under Spanish authority of the 80 million people who speak Spanish throughout the world. The first stage was to conclude a treaty of friendship with Italy for the purpose of securing domination in the Mediterranean. Moreover, Primo de Rivera cherished the hope of obtaining the moral aid of the Papacy for achieving this Empire which was to be "very Catholic", like His Majesty of Spain.

In October 1923, the King of Spain paid a visit to the King of Italy and Primo de Rivera accompanied him. When Alfonso XIII introduced Primo de Rivera to King Victor Emmanuel with the words: "Let me introduce my Mussolini to you," the latter was not exactly pleased. The two Kings and the two dictators nevertheless discussed the possibility of an agreement as to co-operation between the Spanish and Italian fleets in the Mediterranean for the purpose of cutting off the communications of the British and French Empires, whenever this might be necessary. However, it proved impossible to bridge the gap between the two rival ambitions.

Primo de Rivera was not much more successful with Pope Benedict XV. He reminded His Holiness that the 80 millions of Spaniards scattered through-

out the world ought to prompt him to appoint a larger number of Spanish Cardinals. "My very dear Son," replied Benedict XV, "when the Pope names Cardinals, he is inspired by the Holy Spirit. You must therefore, hope that the Holy Spirit will inspire me in the sense of your request." This hope was disappointed, because some time afterwards the Holy Spirit inspired Benedict XV to nominate quite a number of Italian Cardinals.

Mussolini then started diplomatic machinations, but with no greater success than before. When in June 1934 King Victor Emmanuel paid his visit to the King of Spain, the Italian Sovereigns and Mussolini were suddenly recalled to Italy by the Matteotti affair which nearly caused their régime to collapse. Mussolini did not let himself be discouraged; he had recourse to his habitual trick of coercion and blackmail; he sent Ricciotto Garibaldi to Paris, and Garibaldi, acting with the Catalan nationalist leader, Col. Macia, organized the separatist plot which collapsed at Prats de Mollo. Dino Alfieri had secretly proceeded to Madrid, where the Duce had ordered him to reveal the plot to Primo de Rivera's Government.

A close friendship was then established between Alfieri, the Duce's secret envoy, and Yanguas Massia, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Spanish Dictatorship and Professor of International Law at the University of Madrid (to-day a member of the National Council of the Spanish Phalangists and agent of the Fascist Police in Spain). On that occasion it was Primo de Rivera who preferred not to get involved with Italy. He was hard pressed by difficulties in Morocco and he therefore needed the help of France. It was only after the surrender

of Abd-el-Krim and the ratification of the Spanish zone, which was placed on a firm footing with the assistance of the British Army, that the Italo-Spanish treaty of friendship was signed in 1926. At the same time, Franco-Italian relations had reached such a pitch of tension that the two countries were, as President Poincaré was always saying, "within two inches of war".

The text of the Italo-Spanish treaty has never been discovered. Its existence, however, has never been doubted by the Chancelleries of Paris and London. Incidentally, the treaty comprised certain secret clauses which were entrusted to the King of Spain himself and not to the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The document disappeared when Alfonso XIII fled, but it is in the keeping of a famous Spanish monarchist. He is waiting until the Spanish war comes to an end and then he will produce it.

Moreover, the two essential points of this treaty are known; they throw a light upon the attitude adopted by Italy towards the policy of non-intervention in Spain:

(1) Italy obtained the right, in case of war, to establish and maintain a military base in the Balearic Islands.

(2) Spain undertook, in case of war, to prohibit the passage of French troops on her territory.

The secret clauses of the treaty provided that, in case of war, the Italian fleet could make use of the Spanish ports in the Mediterranean. Finally, Spain undertook never to allow the passage of French Colonial troops on her territory. Hence, the treaty was a military alliance directed against the powers which, hitherto, had controlled the lines of com-



munication in the Mediterranean, viz.: Great Britain and France.

Among the files which the Italian Consul-General at Barcelona forgot to take with him when he left



GRANDI

there so suddenly, other official documents were discovered which showed clearly that since 1926 the Italian Government had been taking a great interest in the Balearic Islands. In 1928 Count Grandi, who was then Minister of Foreign Affairs,

asked his Consul in Barcelona to let him know by a cipher telegram all the details regarding the movements of all the foreign warships in the harbours of the Mediterranean within his jurisdiction. Shortly afterwards Grandi expressed his satisfaction at the visit paid to the Balearic Islands by an Italian cruiser. "This group of islands," he said, "is destined to be the setting for the first round of every conflict between the belligerent fleets in the Western Mediterranean."

It was not long before events justified this pronouncement.

The Republic was proclaimed in Spain. The Republican Government adopted a policy of open co-operation with the democratic powers within the framework of the League of Nations. The Italian reaction soon made itself felt. Two days after the proclamation of the Spanish Republic, Signor Rocco, the Italian Minister of Justice, published in *La Stampa* a sensational article entitled "The out-of-date Revolution" in which he asserted that "the alleged Spanish revolution is not one at all. The democratic principles by which it was prompted are out-moded; a true revolution demands blood and can only emerge from a war, civil or foreign."

The whole of the Italian press followed suit. The Spanish Republic, it declared, would be unable to keep order in Morocco and this seemed an excellent opportunity to affirm "the historic rights of Italy" in that sensitive quarter of the Mediterranean. Close contact was secretly established with the Spanish monarchists; the Italian Embassy in Madrid was very open-handed with the Spanish right-wing newspapers *La Nación* and *La Espar*.

A document which has not yet been made public

provides undeniable proof of Italian intervention in the home policy of Spain at that period. In the month of March 1934, some Spanish monarchists came to Rome on an official mission and were headed by Señor Goicoechea, a former Minister. On their arrival they got into touch with Mussolini and laid the foundations of an agreement. The memorandum, the text of which we reproduce below, is a report of the proceedings which led to this agreement. It is dated March 1934 and was discovered among the belongings of Señor Goicoechea when his house was searched a few days after the military revolt. It is written on a sheet of ordinary note-paper which bears the printed heading of the Hôtel du Quirinal. Here is the document:

" We, the undersigned, Lieutenant General Don Emilio Barrera, whose real name is Don Rafael Olazabal, and Señor Lizaso, representative of ' The Traditionalist League ', together with Don Antonio Goicoechea, as head of the Spanish Restoration, have drawn up the appended statement, which is intended to serve as a testimony of what took place at our interview with Signor Mussolini, the head of the Italian Government, and Marshal Italo Balbo, on the afternoon of to-day, March 31st, 1934.

" After having received detailed information, by means of answers given to his questions by each of those present, on the political situation to-day, as well as on the aims and the position of the Army, the fleet and the two monarchist parties in Spain, the Duce declared to those present:

" *That in the first place, he was willing to support, by help and all necessary means, the two parties in opposition to the existing régime in Spain in their endeavour to overthrow that régime and to replace*

*it by a regency intended as a preliminary to the restoration of the monarchy. . . .*

*[" That, secondly, as a practical demonstration and proof of his willingness, he was prepared to supply immediately 20,000 hand grenades, 200 machine guns and 1,500,000 pesetas in cash.*

*" That, in the third place, this assistance was to be regarded as only a preliminary, and that it would be followed, at a favourable opportunity, by assistance on a still larger scale, according to the results achieved and the needs of the situation.*

" Those present expressed their agreement. As regards the payment of the above-mentioned sum, it was arranged that Don Rafael Olazabal should act as representative of the two parties, that he was to take charge of this fund and place it at the joint disposal of the two party chiefs, the Count de Rodas and Don Antonio Goicoechea, to be shared between them when and how they might decide.

" In the same way, it was agreed that, in respect of this first grant of munitions, the above-mentioned chiefs should give the necessary orders concerning the amounts to be distributed to each group and the arrangements for their transport to Spain."

This is obviously not a diplomatic implement, but it is of interest as a memorandum, the genuineness of which cannot be denied.

The Spanish Republic, however, extended and consolidated its hold upon the country. Mussolini began to lose patience. In 1935 he appointed Signor Grazio Pedrazzi as Italian Ambassador at Madrid. Signor Pedrazzi was a prominent member of that old-established Italian nationalist movement from which Mussolini borrowed his idea of a modern Roman empire when he was moving towards a

dictatorship of the right. During the period of his mission at Madrid Signor Pedrazzi came into close touch with the two partakers in the arrangement of March 31st, 1934, Golcoecha and Redezno, the head of the Carlists, and in particular with the ill-fated Calvo, the murder of whom started the military revolt.

The great mistake made both in Paris and London was to overlook the powerful appeal in the Fascist trend of thought which was a sheer negation of those principles of civilization, of democracy, of the balance between the rights and the duties of peoples, upon which the firm structure of peace had been founded in 1918.

In France the English have often been reproached for having welcomed Fascism with the simple and short-sighted remark that every dictatorship in Europe is useful if it contributes to the maintenance of order. Such was undoubtedly Sir Austen Chamberlain's idea when he proceeded to Rome in 1925, at a moment when Mussolini was in considerable difficulties. The British Foreign Minister took the view that the fall of Mussolini would involve Italy in a fresh bout of anarchy and internal disturbances which would form a pretext for further unrest in Europe and would, above all, be likely to harm British commercial interests.

Sir Austen took advantage of a summer cruise in the Mediterranean to meet the Duce at Leghorn. The Duce was not slow to utilize Sir Austen's move as a means of putting his house in order and renewing his imperialistic dreams. He ordered a million and a half picture postcards to be printed, showing him in a smiling mood and chatting with Lady

Chamberlain, and he had these postcards distributed all over Italy.

The following year Sir Austen tried to do Primo de Rivera the same favour by going on a cruise to Barcelona. He imagined that he was acting in the interests of order and peace, whereas both in Italy and Spain, these moves were interpreted as granting a free hand to the joint ambitions of the two Latin dictators.

It may be added that in France the birth of Fascism had been welcomed with sympathy by M. Barrère, the French Ambassador in Rome. All the French Ambassadors who have succeeded M. Barrère at the Farnese Palace, even those who were left-wing politicians, have shown a remarkably easy-going attitude towards Mussolini. They found it convenient to see only his charm of manner, and they turned a blind eye on the pernicious doctrine behind him which he had brought to life and which kept him where he was. They failed to realize that the internal activity of this doctrine, the economic self-sufficiency to which it necessarily led was the negation of those free intellectual exchanges, of that circulation of men and goods which form the basis for peaceful agreements between peoples.

Mussolini continued to wait for the Spanish help which would allow him to obtain that position in the Mediterranean which he deemed indispensable as a foundation for his imperialistic aims. His schemes for undermining the young Spanish Republic and making things easier for the plotters there were supplemented by similar machinations on the part of Germany. Count Welczek had then been German Ambassador at Madrid for several years,

and he was on familiar terms with Alfonso XIII. He maintained a correct attitude when the Spanish Republic was established in 1931, although he kept in close touch with the monarchist elements and he exerted a certain amount of pressure on the right-wing Spanish press. In particular, he was behind the violent campaign which was launched against President Herriot when he paid a visit to Madrid in 1932. The recurrent note in this press campaign was that the object of President Herriot's visit was to obtain from the Government of the Spanish Republic the right of passage for French Colonial troops in time of war, and that this must be prevented at any cost. The Reichswehr, in its turn, had established close contact with the heads of the Spanish Army.

From 1932 to 1936 several hundred Spanish officers who, by a curious coincidence, were at the head of the rebel troops from the first day, were sent to Berlin on what was ostensibly a technical mission and also for the purpose, so it was said, of studying there. These missions had been carried out at the suggestions of Lieut.-Col. Beigbeder, who was then Military Attaché at the Spanish Embassy in Berlin and is now Franco's High Commissioner in Morocco. Beigbeder, who had been a Francophile when he was General Berenger's Adjutant and when the French Army was helping the latter to fight Abd-el-Krim, had become an agent of the German General Staff. He was instrumental in persuading the Spanish Government to place large orders for war material with the factories which had been set up by Germany in Holland and Switzerland, in order to escape the limitations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. Under these circumstances it is fairly clear that Spanish Morocco

at the present moment is an outstanding military base for the Germans.

Meanwhile, Hitler had finally consolidated his power in Germany. The whole of Germany behind him was waxing enthusiastic about that racial mysticism which had singled him out to achieve the regeneration of Germany and control over all the peoples in the universe "for a new future". However this may be, the task of national disintegration pursued in Europe by both of these dictators has not yet produced all its results. The big democracies are remaining faithful to the members of the League of Nations. Neither the English nor the French have ceased to believe in an international law which will allow a peaceful settlement of disputes.

Mussolini took the view that before he could start on a European adventure, he must first destroy this law, put an end to the League of Nations, and show neutrals and those who were still wavering that force still controls international relationships and that this force emanates from Italy. Conditions were not yet favourable in Spain, and he therefore decided upon the conquest of Ethiopia. From this he expected, as far as home affairs were concerned, that by tightening his hold on all the resources of the nation he would be in a position to demand fresh sacrifices from the Italian people. From the point of view of foreign politics, this conquest would undoubtedly bring him material advantage, but his chief gain from it would be of a moral character.

The Ethiopian campaign was prepared in the utmost detail from the beginning of 1934 onwards.



At the Ministry of War in Rome a special study bureau had been set up under the direction of General Amantea, and it was this bureau which settled the plan of the expedition. Then at Naples, at the barracks of Piedigrotta, the nucleus of the requisite military units was organized. On May 26th, 1934, Mussolini informed the Chamber of Deputies that the economic situation was desperate but that nevertheless all the remaining resources of Italy were to be utilized for war preparations. On June 11th the order was given to lay the keels of two armour-plated battleships of 35,000 tons each. On June 22nd 5,000 new reserve sub-lieutenants were appointed. A short time afterwards military manoeuvres were held with great display in the Apennines. On November 16th, 1934, the Government gave its approval to a series of schemes for co-ordinating the military resources of the whole nation. Mussolini justified these measures as follows :

" We are not afraid of the word ' militarist ' nor even of being a warrior nation, that is to say, a nation gifted in the highest of the virtues of obedience, sacrifice and devotion to country."

It was undesirable, however, to give the impression abroad that Italy " wanted " war. The opinion of the chancelleries had to be honoured. A decree dated November 3rd, 1934, strictly curtailed the supply of military information, and prohibited the publication of any particulars on the subject of armaments. Another decree made it obligatory for all citizens to supply details of all securities, money and credits in their possession abroad, thus making it possible for them to be requisitioned and confiscated. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the

Ministry of Colonies, in order to be well prepared for any sentimental objections which might be raised in certain European countries against aggression, they collected, or where necessary, manufactured, documents which would justify the civilizing mission of Italian Fascism by providing the proof of Abyssinian barbarity. It mattered little that Italy herself, in pursuit of a different policy, had called upon the members of the League of Nations to welcome this country of barbarians among them.

Before burning his boats, Mussolini turned a wary eye on Europe to try and discover what the reactions to his plan might be so that, if necessary, he could diminish or neutralize them. He did not believe that it was possible for Great Britain, disarmed and hardly recovering from the most serious economic crisis which she had experienced for many years, to attempt any counter-move except in the form of a gamble. France would do nothing that England would not attempt. He had hopes of Berlin. The doctrine in vogue there resembled his own, in purpose if not in its actual tenets; and Berlin, too, hated and despised democracies and small nations.

Contrary, however, to what the Duce had expected, his meeting with Hitler at Venice on June 11th, 1934, led only to distrust and suspicion on the part of them both. Mussolini had done everything he could to hasten this meeting. His press extolled Hitler as a great ally. Why then did the interview produce so unexpected a result? Mussolini thought that in Hitler he would find a "young imitator" whose fondest wish it was to become his ally and to subscribe to all the commitments that Italy would ask of him. A joint threat

of war on the part of Italy and Germany would hamper the action of the other powers.

Mussolini had told his henchmen that his meeting with Hitler was going to be an historical event which would change the face of Europe. The first set of talks between the two dictators revealed nothing but disagreements. They left Mussolini in a state of nervous exasperation; he informed his inner circle that it was useless to go on and that it would be best if Hitler left as soon as possible. The Führer on his part seemed equally upset.

"What would you say to a joint plan of action in a future war?" the Duce is supposed to have asked. "We are not ready," Hitler replied, so we are told. "A firm but cautious policy, a progressive democratic rearmament will enable us, with the help of diplomacy, to obtain satisfaction for the chief German demands, without going to war at all."

Mussolini could wait no longer. He therefore decided on a radical change in the Fascist policy. He seemed quite disposed to make friends with France. He thought it possible to make capital out of the French opposition to all attempts at an "Anschluss" in Austria and thus to attain a military hold on the Brenner. As Great Britain seemed indifferent to this question and to the affairs of Central Europe in general, France, he reflected, would undoubtedly find it quite natural to remain indifferent to British interests on the Nile, and might "neutralize" or "diminish" in the eyes of the League of Nations any unfavourable impressions which might be produced by his attack on Ethiopia.

Monsieur Laval, the new French Minister for Foreign Affairs, did in fact regard the advances of

Musolini as the opportunity which he had always wanted for closer relations with Italy. Such a possibility was and is certainly always to be desired, but it should be achieved, if at all, within the scope of the French traditional policy of maintaining the principles of the League of Nations and co-operating with Great Britain, on the lines of the policy adopted by M. Barthou.

Owing to the fact that M. Laval could see only what was immediately before him, and perhaps also because he believed that the Duce meant what he said, he gave Fascism, without realising what he was doing, the chance it wanted of spreading uneasiness and doubt among all the nations of Europe, while lowering the prestige both of the League of Nations and of the great democracies who had remained faithful to it. To make matters worse, it was Germany who was to reap the benefit of this uneasiness and these doubts, while Musolini, faithful to his mystical belief in force, was to pay a visit to Berlin.

### CHAPTER III

## "DOWN WITH TRADITIONS!"

HERE is a significant chapter in the political records of the Laval ministry which has not yet been written. It is a record of French diplomacy deviating from its natural course. We propose to give an account of it with the utmost detachment.

Until M. Pierre Laval made his appearance at the Quai d'Orsay, all the ministers of foreign affairs who followed M. Aristide Briand had, more or less unswervingly, kept to the same line of foreign

policy, i.e. within the scope of international politics they had applied the democratic principles of freedom, solidarity and equipoise of rights and duties on the part of every nation, whether great or small. Although there were differences of opinion as to how these principles were to be applied, Anglo-



*2011*

LAVAL

French co-operation had continued to organize European peace on this basis.

M. Barthou had fallen a victim to the dauntless determination with which he had taken over this task of achieving security in Europe. When he died in the mayor's parlour of Marseilles town hall,<sup>2</sup> the impetus had already been given to an advancement of French influence and prestige.

Hardouin's journeys in Central Europe and the Balkans and Poland had prepared the way for it in conformity with the future Franco-Russian pact and within the framework of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The Little Entente, the Balkan countries and even Turkey, had anticipated the possibility of concluding pacts which, like the Franco-Russian agreement, could be joined by Germany and Italy, but which enabled them to counter the blackmail of the dictatorships by saying: "Accept this mutual assistance which will be arranged whatever happens, either with you or against you." It looked as if they were playing a winning game.

The new head of the Quai d'Orsay had, under Briand, been the last President of the Council in 1931. Pierre Laval comes of Auvergne peasant stock and possesses very keen inborn intelligence. Although fundamentally patriotic in his own way, his outlook is as realistic as can be, and he showed that he despised the lessons of the past, even those of most recent date. He showed also a certain contempt for democracy and even for demagoguery, of which he had been rather too lavish in the course of his political career. He regarded the League of Nations as a scatterbrain sort of scheme.

He had accompanied Briand to Berlin. This journey had left him with the impression that it was possible to reach an agreement with Germany, and that the only reason why this had not yet been achieved was because of unwillingness to get rid of former commitments with the smaller countries.

M. Laval, throughout the whole of his ministerial career, kept on saying that he was anxious to reach an agreement with Germany and complained of

the clumsy manner in which Germany behaved towards France. "He wanted to succeed in doing what Briand had failed to do" was the opinion of M. Mandel, expressed at the time. Briand and Laval, however, differed very widely. One of them was looking for peace with a genuine faith, the other with a certain amount of cynicism. Briand, moreover, was unable to imagine a world without a close Anglo-French agreement. Laval, owing to his mistrust of the League of Nations, of which Great Britain was then the champion, was mistrustful of the British Government, perhaps also because the realistic attitude of the Foreign Office clashed with his own realistic outlook. As a matter of fact Laval pursued the foreign policy which was exactly in accordance with the unspoken ideas of the average Frenchman. The gist of Laval's argument was as follows:

"You do not want war, do you? Very well, then, let me reach an agreement with the Germans: they are our neighbours, they can attack us for they are strong."

Such was the reasoning which he brought to bear on the Saar plebiscite. When negotiating on this subject with Herr Koester, the German Ambassador in Paris, he was willing to stretch a point with a view to coaxing Germany into an agreement. This eagerness for an agreement with Germany in connection with the Saar harmonized with the outlook in military circles.

In the course of the ceremony which took place on November 9th or 10th, 1934, at the Arc de Triomphe, in honour of King Alexander, Marshal Pétain said to General Maurin, the new Minister of War: "What we have to do in this business of the

Saar plebiscite is to avoid anything which will create a new Alsace-Lorraine." It was in this spirit that M. Flandin, President of the Council, coldly settled the matter a few days afterwards with Herr Koester, the German Ambassador.

In accordance with the principle that if you want to have peace at home, you had better begin by agreeing with your closest neighbours, M. Laval had earmarked an agreement with Italy as one of his chief tasks. Incidentally, the French general staff at that time held the view that it would be dangerous for France, in case of a conflict with Germany, or a general conflict, to maintain twelve divisions on the Alpine frontier, a course which would be absolutely necessary if relations with Italy did not improve.

In the course of the dramatic scene which occurred during the session of the League of Nations after King Alexander had been assassinated at Marseille M. Laval endeavoured to avoid any direct clash with Italy, although Italian responsibility was obvious. This attitude, while it caused ill-feeling to rankle in Yugoslavia for some time to come, was all the more appreciated on the other side of the Alps because, as we have seen, urgent reasons were driving Mussolini to seek a rapprochement with France.

M. Laval took advantage of these circumstances and decided to go to Rome, just as his predecessor, M. Barthou, had intended. Barthou's idea had merely been to sound Italy as to her attitude towards a possible pact of mutual assistance with Yugoslavia which would complete the tally of the pacts, of which he had established the basis during his journey in Central Europe and the Balkans. What



it amounted to, in fact, was a journey which, approved of by France's allies and friends, would show his politeness and add to his knowledge.

M. Laval was not troubled by any such scruples as these. What he wanted was to produce a regular agreement with Italy, so that he would be free to say to any other countries whose interests were involved: "Make your own settlement with Rome when your turn comes." Thus, while officially he was continuing the policy of his predecessors, he had in mind the possibility of another policy which would be more likely to give France the security which she had always wanted.

The negotiations between the Chancelleries had revealed the fact that Mussolini would not undertake any commitments in a pact of general security, and that he would insist upon a settlement of the Tunisian question satisfactory to himself. M. Laval was exceedingly anxious to meet the Duce, for he was sure that with him he would find common ground for an agreement. At the end of November 1934 the Ministerial Council sanctioned a draft agreement which was practically the same as the one which Mussolini and Laval were to sign at the Palace of Venice. Then, on January 2nd, 1935, the journey to Rome was settled, although the draft agreement which Italy had expressed her willingness to accept was very far from the scheme proposed by France. Only the question of colonies and of Austria were to be dealt with straightaway. It was decided to examine, later on, those concerning the mutual guarantees that France and Italy would give each other in the Danubian Basin and Central Europe, in connection with the pacts which were in the process of being concluded there. At this point

Italy demanded that the questions should be tabulated. M. Spaljkovich, the Yugoslav Minister in Paris, nevertheless had no misgivings. He wept with emotion as he embraced M. Laval on the station platform as he was leaving for Rome, and assured him that he had the full confidence of Yugoslavia.

Mussolini had dropped a hint to Paris that in the course of one of the toasts, for want of anything better, he intended to make some remarks which would gratify our Yugoslav allies; he would state that the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia was one of the European bases for European peace. No doubt something better than this could have been achieved. As we have seen, Mussolini had firmly made up his mind to meet France more than half-way. The support, or at least the neutrality of France, was indispensable to him before he plunged into the conquest of Ethiopia. The success of his venture depended upon the speed with which he could produce results. An uncertain or wavering attitude on the part of the French Government would only complicate matters at the League of Nations and cause valuable time to be spent in long-winded talk at Geneva.

On January 4th when, towards the end of the afternoon, the train steamed into the station at Rome, the French journalists, who had been instructed not to look out of their carriage window, nevertheless managed to observe that the welcome was chilly and astonishingly silent. The only people on the platform were Mussolini in a top hat and a few foreign ambassadors standing round him. In front of the station there were also very few people. There was no cheering: the Roman crowd, well

disciplined, showed no signs of enthusiasm until the Duce informed them that M. Laval had complied with the wishes of Italy.

On the 5th. during the celebrations at the Palace of Venice, which were as lovely as a Shakespearean setting, the French journalists were presented to the Duce, who favoured each of them with a few affable remarks. To me he said: "That's a nice frock you're wearing; your name is Genevieve, but your articles on Italy are unfair." I had the impression that he was really quite unlike any other man. The attitude, suggestive of sheer brute force, with which he overwhelmed the shrinking Laval, was largely a pose; in the same way, too, behind his jutting chin and his searching glance there was a certain amount of affected grimace.

At the dinner before the reception, Laval had said to Mussolini when proposing a toast to him: "You have written the finest page in the history of modern Italy."

The German ambassador, Herr von Hasselt, wore a dark dress-suit without any decorations, and was thus conspicuous among the blaze of uniforms and the glint of orders and crosses. He ostentatiously carried on a conversation with M. Laval and this was duly noted.

Although care was taken that evening to say nothing about Abyssinia, I discovered enough to convince me that it was the chief topic of conversation in political and fashionable circles at Rome. The Wal-Wal incident had just been made known, although its origins remained uncertain. The Negus, who was becoming alarmed by Italian secrecy, as well as by the large numbers of troops sent by Italy to Eritrea and Somaliland, and who,

moreover, was anxious to avoid an armed conflict at all costs, had applied to the League of Nations on the previous day, January 3rd, 1935, to have the incident settled. This in itself was enough to worry the chancelleries. Meanwhile, the negotiations between Laval and Mussolini had reached the final bargaining stage. At times the conversations became brisk. For example, there was one which took place on January 6th at the Chigi Palace, and which dealt with the adjustment of the Libyan frontier. Mussolini did not appear satisfied when several hundred miles of territory were ceded to him. He urged that he was no "desert collector", and that Marshal Balbo, who had flown over these particular territories, had seen no inhabited area of any size there. M. Laval pointed out that they were not concerned as to whether cities like Rome or Aubervilliers could be discovered amid the sand.

On the evening of the day upon which this discussion took place, in the course of the reception which was held by the French Ambassador, the Count de Charnbrun, at the Farnese Palace in honour of M. Laval, the latter held a private conversation with the Duce which has caused much ink to flow. What could these two men have said to each other, in the safe seclusion of the French Ambassador's study? Nobody else was present and M. Laval never gave any account of his diplomatic conversations, although his private secretary always urged him to do so. Mussolini has always asserted that M. Laval left him a free hand in Ethiopia. M. Laval emphatically repudiated this every time it was thrown up in his face, which his own ministerial council did not hesitate to do on his return.

It is more reasonable to suppose that in a quarter of an hour M. Laval was unable to view the Abyssinian problem in its whole complexity, involving the League of Nations, Great Britain and France



BALBO

respectively. Mussolini must have skilfully conducted the argument by means of cautious allusions and ended it with veiled hints without, however, stating in so many words that what Italy aimed at in Ethiopia was the conquest of the country by force.

M. Laval certainly never assured Mussolini that France would support Italy if the latter country adopted a policy of plain assassination. In reply to Mussolini's vague invitations, he could do no more than assure the Duce that there was no further reason why French interests should hinder Italian interests in Ethiopia. Of course, that was enough to place M. Laval in a very delicate situation in the near future. Thus, at the height of the war in Ethiopia, when the Italians were using poison gas and other methods which shocked the conscience of the world, to overcome the opposition of the Abyssinians, M. Laval was accused in certain political quarters as being responsible for their barbarities. He asked Mussolini to send him a statement which would make it clear that these suspicions were quite unfounded. The statement which he received, failed to satisfy him and he then gave up any further attempt to secure this odd testimonial.

By the time M. Laval had left the Quai d'Orsay, he came to the conclusion that Mussolini had treated him badly. On the Italian side, after the conversation at the Farnese Palace, Mussolini informed his most faithful henchmen that Laval was the only foreign statesman who had understood what Fascism was. Was this his way of halting off M. Laval? Everybody realized that Fascism meant Roman Imperialism and that Roman Imperialism meant conquest and war.

M. Laval who was experienced in the dodges of parliamentary politics, such as spoken commitments with unspoken reservations and semi-compromises, may have conducted his negotiations at Rome

skillfully, but a dictator is not an opponent in a by-election.

On the next day, amid the twilght of a huge hall in the Palace of Venice, in the presence of the press representatives, the agreement of Rome was signed with great pomp. Mussolini informed the journalists that the Franco-Italian agreement would be a kind of continuous creation "in the course of which the friendship of the two countries would be endlessly revived".

He then allowed popular enthusiasm to express itself or rather he suggested this enthusiasm to it. At the opera while "Mignon" was being performed, the whole house rose while the Marseillaise was being sung. The Duce then came into M. Laval's box and shook his hand effusively. In the streets, especially in those near the Hôtel Excelsior, where M. Laval and the French delegation were staying, concertinas and penny whistles could be heard evening after evening, playing versions of the Marseillaise and the Mædlen.

M. Laval left Rome satisfied with what he had achieved there, and at Paris he worked up enthusiasm for the newly-found friendship of the great Latin sister-nation. Mussolini was also happy as he examined the maps of Ethiopia in his study at the Palace of Venice. What had he actually granted? In Tunisia it meant, if anything, that the existing conditions were regularised, and this ensured extended possibilities for his propaganda and his expansion; as regards Yugoslavia, promises of subsequent conversations; subsequent agreements also concerning the schemes for an Eastern Locarno. And, of course, I had almost forgotten, he promised bayonets on the Brenner, should Germany carry

out the Anschluss with Austria, but the question of the Anschluss was then no longer an urgent one.

On the other hand, it is true, he did not seem to have gained much. The main thing was the cession of a few miles of sand on the borders of Libya, but close to the motor roads leading to Lake Tchad. Then there was the cession of the tiny island of Derna which, however, is opposite to Perim and makes it possible to control the outlets to the Red Sea towards the Indian Ocean ; also there was a share of the railway from Djibouti to Addis Ababa, but then that was the only motor road from Abyssinia to the Red Sea. And above all there was the effect upon average French public opinion, which now tended to be very easy-going towards its " prodigal sister ". Her appetite may be big, but she has been kept on such short commons and was so shabbily treated in 1918. If a swiftly conducted expedition against a savage African tribe, with which, moreover, she has old accounts to settle, will enable her to colonize a fertile territory and to turn Abyssinia into a colony for her surplus population, to which she is absolutely entitled, by all means. Perhaps Great Britain will raise difficulties before the League of Nations, but in the end they will be satisfactorily settled, and besides, the League of Nations has done nothing but cause annoyance, hasn't it ? And so it came about that the Agreements of Rome hastened the realization of Mussolini's imperialistic dream.

Without any delay, Rome adopted a number of military measures which amounted to preparations for war. They formed the object of decrees published by *La Gazette Officielle* on January 21st, 1935. On February 17th, at the conclusion of the great



Fascist Council, a communiqué stated that the Council had adopted all necessary measures for facilitating a prompt increase in the Italian military forces to face any situation whatsoever. Three days later on, the Supreme Committee of National Defence, in the report of one of its meetings, was even more explicit. "Everything will be ready at the proper time so that, should Italy be compelled to make war, she will be assured of a speedy victory." From that time onwards, the Italian press, in perfect unison, prepared public opinion for what was to come. Its headline news concerned Abyssinia, the cruelty and barbarity of its inhabitants, its un-exploited wealth, the utilization of which was to be the basis of Fascist colonization in Italy. The whole of Italy, whose social distress was increasing, saw rising before it as a mirage the fertile fields of this land of promise, and besides, was it not imperative to avenge the Adowa disaster? By every conceivable means the minds of the Italians were doped with the intoxication of war.

In France, on the other hand, the signature of the Rome agreements was followed by a certain slackening of tension. It was believed there that Italian friendship was sincere and that it would facilitate an agreement with Germany. A word of caution was uttered only by M. Herriot in Parliament, and this was repeated, later on, in the Montbéliard speech which helped to bring about the collapse of the Laval ministry.

At the meeting of the Ministerial Council a few comments were made on the disadvantage of letting Italy have territories which, though not of any economic value to her, could be used as the basis of operations in the Lake Tchad region. Other

speakers pointed out that it had been unwise to cede the island of Dameria. As soon as this island was fortified, its value in the Red Sea would be analogous to that of Perim, which Great Britain had turned into a centre of strategic importance on the route to the Far East. In the end, however, the negotiations were appended in their entirety.

In the lobbies of the Chamber, the stock remark was that the importance of the agreement with Italy lay in the spirit in which it had been reached and which augured extremely well for the future. M. Laval himself drew up the report on the day's business which concluded the debate on the Rome agreements. He insisted that it should contain the same reference to him as was made to Clemenceau on the day after the Armistice, viz., "The Chamber and the Senate thanked him personally."

Opinion had been so carefully directed that there was nothing left for the M.P.s to do but to claim a share of the credit enjoyed by M. Laval as "organizer of peace". Each of them reminded his hearers how, in the past, he had helped to produce a more favourable development of Franco-Italian relations. Blum himself remarked to M. Emanuel Berl, the well-known journalist: "While it is true that I am not a friend of Laval, he is genuinely a friend of peace."

*Quos vult perdere Jupiter dementat !*

The great danger of M. Laval's policy lay precisely in the fact that it seemed sound and logical to the general public, which had no proper knowledge of the points at issue, and had been given only muddled accounts of them. It was a plausible kind of policy which shirked the root of the matter, the lessons of history and the necessities of geography, in

favour of window-dressing and the appeal to sentiment. It is a matter of common knowledge that Napoleon III paid heavily for just such a weak-kneed policy as this.

However important it may be for Great Britain and France to reach an agreement with Germany and Italy, this agreement will be devoid of danger only if it is achieved within the scope of a European balance of power which is incompatible with the hegemony of either of these countries. An agreement with Germany and Italy would not justify France in giving up those alliances which Germany and Italy call upon her to surrender because they stand in the way of the German and Italian craving for expansion and supremacy in Europe. The *equipoise*, which is essential for any lasting agreement, will be impaired if France drops these alliances and friendships.

The average French citizen at Paris does not live in security there, and Germany, without being menaced in the rear, is able to mass all her troops on the Rhine. The average French citizen, too, though surprised at Great Britain for not having always perceived that her frontier was on the Rhine, will not accept the suggestion that France, in her turn, has interests to defend in Bohemia or on the Vistula.

During the session of the League of Nations in January 1935 this trend in French policy which M. Laval was aiming at became very obvious, and, as Mussolini had anticipated, it caused considerable dismay and serious alarm.

What had been the traditional line of French policy at Geneva after the Covenant of the League had experienced a set-back? To make a fresh

start with the Covenant and to strengthen it by concluding special pacts restricted in scope, such as:

An Eastern Pact comprising Russia, the Baltic States, Poland, Czechoslovakia and France;

A Central European extension of the Little Entente already including Czechoslovakia, Roumania and Yugoslavia, to which would be added Austria, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Italy and France;

A Balkan Pact comprising Roumania, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Greece, and if possible, Bulgaria.

A Mediterranean Pact which would be of joint interest to Great Britain, Italy, France, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey.

M. Laval, in his heart of hearts, did not really believe that the Covenant of the League could be restored on such foundations as these, nor did he believe it possible that Russia, Poland and Germany could all be induced to join an Eastern Pact. Nevertheless, towards Great Britain and the lesser Powers he had to identify himself at Geneva with this policy, although it ran counter to the one which he really considered to be more in accordance with the interests of his country and of peace, but which he did not venture to pursue openly. This explains the hedging and the evasiveness which accompanied all his diplomatic activities and which caused much concern both in London and Central Europe.

The Paris diplomatic representatives of the Little Entente countries, who were particular adherents of French traditional policy, expressed their dissatisfaction to him in the plainest terms. His talks with Monsieur Titelescu in which there were, to put it mildly, some lively passages, are still remembered at Geneva.

One day, M. Titulescu, as Chairman of the Little Entente, complained bitterly to M. Laval of the lack of sympathy shown by France towards the Little Entente policy. M. Fotitch, the Yugoslav Minister, who was there at the time, in order to relieve the tension, produced a magnificent watch. "Do you know why Titulescu gave me this?" he asked M. Laval.

M. Laval shook his head, whereupon M. Fotitch explained to him that one day M. Titulescu had been extremely angry with him, and as he is kindness itself, he made him a present of the watch to show that there was no ill-feeling.

M. Laval then said: "In that case I am entitled to a clock."

"You shall have one," said M. Titulescu.

"Now I come to think of it," added M. Laval, "I would rather have a watch than a clock, because then I would always wear Titulescu near my heart."

"You shall have the watch," replied Titulescu, "but you'd like to have Titulescu, not near your heart but in your pocket. Let me tell you that it can't be done."

M. Laval got his watch. Is it in his pocket or near his heart?

By an irony of fate, M. Laval was the French Minister called upon to sign the Franco-Russian Pact. The signing of this Pact, the joint achievement of MM. Herriot, Paul-Boncour, and Barthou, was a noteworthy event. In the opinion of everybody, even of those who were opposed to it, the conclusion of this Pact considerably strengthened the French position. The economic, technical and military strength of the U.S.S.R. was placed at the disposal

of the organization of security such as France and Great Britain had planned it within the scope of the League of Nations.



TITULESCU

M. Laval realized its value, but if he was disposed to do everything which ought to be done to ensure its conclusion, he was unwilling that the Franco-Russian Pact should, later on, become an obstacle

to his policy of bringing France closer to Germany and Italy.

In this connection a witty diplomat compared the diplomatic plight of France to a theatrical setting in which the producer utilizes all his scenery at the same time.

In my opinion, in order that the Pact should not prevent an agreement with Germany, all its effectiveness would have had to be sacrificed. There is only one argument which Germany understands: might is right. That is why it was a mistake to raise objections when the Russians warned the pact to come into force before all decisions had been reached at Geneva. Without this latter arrangement, the value of Franco-Russian co-operation was seriously handicapped, and satisfied only Germany who now regarded the pact merely as an attempt at theoretical encirclement which would supply her with material for propaganda.

The long debates which ensued at the Quai d'Orsay from April 20th to May 1st, 1935, between M. Laval and M. Potemkin, the Russian Ambassador, had only one purpose and that was to enable M. Laval to say: "This Pact does not involve any commitments; I have emptied it of its contents; I have not placed the French Army at the disposal of the Soviets." The conclusion which Germany drew was that France remained isolated, that she would no longer be able to rely upon Russia and that she was unwilling to see Russia relying upon her. Here it should be added that at the Ministerial Council, General Maurin, Minister of War, declared that the Russian Army was not of primary interest to France. French public opinion remained more or less indifferent.

"However strange it may seem," M. Georges Mandel has remarked, "the pact with Russia which later on was to give rise to such heated arguments, caused scarcely any stir at the time when it was concluded. Whatever objections may be made to it, French common-sense realized that, if we had not come to terms with Moscow, the Germans would no doubt have done so sooner or later, and that, in this case, the danger would have been obvious. Influential representatives of Germany, such as Herr Nadoemy, the German Ambassador in Moscow, and certain leading members of the General Staff, had never dropped the policy of Rapallo. It is hardly necessary to point out what use would have been made of the vast resources of Russia, in due course, by the technicians and military experts of Germany. If the only effect of the agreement of May 2nd, 1935, was to deprive them of this and to facilitate the furnishing of supplies to the Little Entente States in case of war, it will be understood why, in the Cabinet to which I then had the honour to belong, such able men as MM. Parnot and Louis Marin identified themselves with it."

The chief argument in favour of the signature of the Pact was the fear of seeing a fresh co-operation between Germany and Russia come into existence. Germany would find in Russia the raw materials which she needed. Her expansion would thus be facilitated and, in case of a conflict, she would have a reserve of 174,000,000 men.

It was M. Herriot who was called upon to vindicate this Pact in Parliament, and this was the logical sequel to the policy with which he had always identified himself, *viz.* the resumption of friendly relations with Russia. He rightly



emphasized the open character of this Pact. There was nothing to prevent Germany from joining it and she had, indeed, been invited to do so. The Franco-Russian Pact was not directed against her; on the contrary, if she decided to join it, the security of Eastern Europe would be assured, once and for all. It might be regarded as the auspicious first-fruits of an Eastern Locarno.

Such were the circumstances under which the Pact was signed at Paris on May 2nd, 1935. It stipulates that :

" In case of any violation of the Russian or French frontiers, the Council of the League of Nations will be immediately summoned by the two contracting parties who must accept its pronouncements, unless the Council fails to reach a unanimous decision, a circumstance which will permit both parties to resume their freedom of action. In case of flagrant aggression, the two parties would not only call upon the Council of the League to meet, but would, at the same time, take steps to help each other effectively, pending the decisions of the Council."

M. Laval then proceeded to Soviet Russia. Amid brilliant sunshine his train steamed into the station at Moscow which was decorated with French tricolours and red flags. A military band played a very long Marseillaise and a very short Internationale. In paying this visit to Moscow M. Laval was concerned not so much with the Pact as with the home policy of France. During his stay there, which lasted for 48 hours and the purpose of which was to adjust the future of Franco-Russian relations,



STALIN

he thought that he would be able to induce Stalin to bring pressure to bear upon the French Communists and remind them that their patriotic duty was to drop all agitation against French armaments, and also not to endanger his personal position at Aubervilliers, where he would be in opposition to them at the municipal elections.

"We will speak as man to man. I am no diplomat," said Stalin, when welcoming M. Laval to the Kremlin. M. Laval replied: "Neither am I. Let us begin." All questions concerning the application of the Pact were smoothly settled. In particular it was agreed that conversations should be held between the French and Russian General Staffs, in the following July. On the other hand, in response to M. Laval's express wish, Stalin made a public statement, in which he emphasized the need for developing the military power of France.

That same evening, M. Laval, during a performance of "Sadko" at the Opera, told his French colleagues that "France was anxious to maintain relations with Russia gradually in the spirit of the Pact". In one of the intervals M. Potemkin and M. Laval urged the Press representatives to emphasize the importance of Stalin's public statement.

It was a fine spring night when M. Laval started for Warsaw, where the funeral of Piłsudski was about to take place. He left Moscow very much impressed by the strength and the drive of the new Russia. The remarkable air-display which had been held in his honour, and in the course of which hundreds of aeroplanes had, for two hours and in faultless style, traced the initials of the French Republic on the Russian sky, confirmed the opinion of the U.S.S.R. which M. Herriot had expressed in

1912: "We are witnessing the birth of the new United States. A Power is astir in the world."

M. Laval, however, continued "backing two horses". On the very day when he visited the



LITVINOFF

Kremlin, he sent a message to Berlin to the effect that the Wilhelmstrasse need have no misgivings about his trip to Moscow. While he was there, nothing would be considered which might run counter to a policy of agreement with Germany.

The Wilhelmstrasse realized how they could make the most capital out of this policy. They instructed their ambassador at Moscow to invite M. Litvinoff to call at Berlin on his way back from Pilsudski's funeral. M. Litvinoff declined.

It was at the "European Hotel" at Warsaw, after leaving the field of Mokotow where, on a gun-carriage, Pilsudski's coffin had dominated a final and impressive military review, that M. Laval had a talk with General Goering, who had come there to represent Germany at the funeral. Goering skilfully discussed the Franco-Russian Pact against the background of French home policy which, as he knew, was awkward for M. Laval. He pointed out to him the pull which the Pact gave to the Communist Party in France and the danger of Bolshevization in Europe. He asserted that there was only one enemy in the world as far as the civilized countries were concerned, and that was Bolshevism, against which all countries ought to unite. He drew up, there and then, the scheme for a "holy alliance" of the totalitarian countries, which Germany would utilize as the most apt medium for her foreign policy in Central Europe. M. Laval was no doubt thinking of his forthcoming elections and showed that Goering's argument had impressed him. He certainly gave the impression that he was wavering when, on his return to Paris, misunderstandings with Russia made their appearance.

M. Mandel has summed the situation up as follows:

"As the elections drew nearer, the political parties began to show fight. Quite a number of political problems assumed a different appearance. The question of relations with Moscow was scrutinized



GOMLING

from the point of view of home politics and the tragic misunderstanding which had handicapped the Franco-Russian alliance even before the war, was now repeated. Just as, forty years ago, the extreme left had denounced the close friendship between Paris and St. Petersburg as a danger to the Republic, so now many nationalists showed their alarm that the Pact might favour the French Communist Party. Their hostility, which was shrewdly stimulated by foreign propaganda, became more intense when, in accordance with the instructions of the Third Internationale, the Communists took steps to constitute the Popular Front.

"Thus, while there was still a strong majority for a policy of understanding with the Soviets, it is fair to assume that this majority, at least as far as its leaders were concerned, was more interested in the doctrine controlling this policy than anxious to put it into practice."

In any case, as the Air Minister pointed out in the Chamber, the Pact was not supplemented by any military agreement. The German manoeuvre was successful, and France was involved in all the disadvantages of an association which, while by no means free from risks, brought her in return no positive guarantee. Trifling matters often produce serious results. M. Laval's electoral setback at Aubervilliers was the work of the Communists. It added to the mistrust which M. Laval was already showing towards Moscow. He now felt certain that Stalin had done him a bad turn with the French Communists through the Third Internationale.

Accordingly, in order to rid himself of the Pact and to show his dissatisfaction, he called for the

ratification of the Pact by Parliament. The French Constitution did not demand it, because the only treaties which must be submitted to the Chambers are those involving the integrity of French territory, or the finances of the State. He thus delayed the application of the Pact. It did not come up before Parliament to be ratified until a month after M. Laval had ceased to be Minister of Foreign Affairs, and it was noticed that all his close associates voted against it. Until the last minute, in the lobbies of the Senate, he declared that he himself would vote against it, but in the end he changed his mind and voted for it.

Great Britain was officially waiting to see what would happen. The ministers there who were watching the course of events, felt satisfied with the Pact as a means of increasing the distance between Moscow and Berlin and approved of it as an asset in the organization of collective security in Central Europe, but their approval was tempered by their traditional fear of Russia—a fear which was intensified by the communistic propaganda of the Third International. This frame of mind explains the success achieved in Great Britain and in French nationalist circles by Hitler's declaration: "The struggle against Communism underlies the whole of European organization and co-operation; it should knit together those peoples who continue to stand for order and property."

In Great Britain, just as in France, skilful propaganda from the totalitarian countries helped to spread the belief that the Franco-Russian Pact was a stumbling-block to any agreement with Germany and Italy. This confusion between foreign affairs and internal policy thoroughly obscured the issue.



It is safe to say that this failure to distinguish between the two sets of interests was the besetting weakness of the democratic governments. François I was a friend of the Grand Turk, but that did not stop him from chasing the Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean. Louis XIV was the ally of the Protestant princes at the very time when he revoked the Edict of Nantes. The French Government of the Third Republic entered into an alliance with the Tsars, without impairing its democratic policy in the slightest.

Oddly enough, this fixed idea that the French Communists were at Stalin's beck and call had been strengthened by none other than M. Laval himself, when with the best of intentions he had asked Stalin for a declaration which would be likely to make the Communist Party express its approval of an arms policy and thus intervene in the internal policy of France.

Germany did not miss this chance of levying blackmail. She said to France: "Give up the Pact and you will have peace." By that she meant a peace which would enable her, without any conflict, to achieve all her aims. She was perfectly well aware that as long as the Pact lasted, even though it might cause differences of opinion or be reduced in scope, if she attempted to achieve by force her dream of hegemony, the Pact would meet with unconditional and unanimous approval on the part of the French and Russians.

. . . . .

As soon as M. Laval's visit to Rome was over, Mussolini started to put the finishing touches to his preparations for the conquest of Ethiopia. The

batch of speeches which he delivered between February and September 1935 forms one long scream of defiance at the League of Nations and Great Britain. The latter country, in the Duce's view, had no chance whatever of foiling the Italian venture. Fascist aircraft could easily destroy the base at Malta; the Italian troops in Cyrenaica could make things very awkward for the English in Egypt where, moreover, it would not be difficult to engineer a serious revolt. Great Britain had no army or air force in fighting trim. As for the British fleet, Mussolini took the view that it was utterly out of date. He himself referred to it as "just so much old iron".

Always true to his policy of bluff and blackmail, the Duce threatened that any power which tried to thwart his conquest, would have to bear the brunt of Italian bayonets. "The Fascist Will has always overcome its opponents and it is going to do so again in the near future," he declared at Guidonia on April 28th. At Cagliari and Sassari a few days later he enlarged upon this theme: "We have accounts, old and new, to settle. We shall settle them, and we shall do so without paying the slightest heed to what may be said about it abroad, for we are the sole judges of our own interests and the guarantors of our future, because we are exclusively what we are and none else. . . . Alleged public opinion abroad is merely a foolish scarecrow which will be set on fire by the ardour of the Blackshirts."

In the early part of July, at Ebohi, he bellowed his well-known challenge to the world: "Those who fancy that they can stop us with words will meet with a forcible reply from our first-line fighting

squadrons. I snap my fingers at them!" He had determined that his act of aggression was to leave none of his accounts unsettled, particularly those owing to the League of Nations, in spite of his commitments there. In fact, he demanded that the League should reject the protest of the victim without even hearing it.

On September 4th, 1935, Benito Mussolini arrived at Geneva for the meetings of the Council and the Assembly. He jauntily remarked to the representatives of the Press: "In any case, the members of the League will have to make up their minds and decide whether they want us or Ethiopia to leave this organization." On the next day he read before the Council a declaration by the Duce who, in it, announced his refusal to negotiate with Ethiopia, a country whose admission to the League had been proposed by Italy when she thought that she would be able to use its vote whenever she pleased. Now that Ethiopia was defending its threatened independence it could no longer expect to be treated on an equal footing with Rome. Mussolini refused point-blank to associate himself with the pact of equality between nations which is the rule at Geneva; he wished to substitute for it the principle of State hierarchies.

The British delegates decided that this was going rather too far. The point at issue was no longer Ethiopia but the future of the League itself. There was no time left, they said, to indulge in formalities which would enable Rome, in the meanwhile, to carry out its "war". Italy must undertake first and foremost to renounce the use of force for the settlement of the conflict. The Council of the League associated itself almost unanimously

with the idea of a complete application of the Pact.

M. Laval sat on the fence. On September 10th Sir Samuel Hoare had a critical conversation with him. Sir Samuel pointed out that the manner in which the League dealt with the Ethiopian question would decide whether England would continue to have confidence in the League. He went on to say that the British Cabinet regarded what was then going on as a final test which would enable them to judge whether the principles of the League had any practical value. If the system were shown to be workable, Great Britain would be inclined to let it function to its full extent later on, should there be any complications involving Central and Eastern Europe. Sir Samuel added that he was prepared to give this assurance before the Assembly at Geneva and also in the British Parliament.

At this decisive juncture in British policy M. Laval still wavered. On September 11th, at 11 o'clock in the morning, Sir Samuel Hoare nevertheless proceeded to inform the League of Nations in public what he had already told M. Laval in private. His speech was an impressive one. I can still recall the neat figure of Sir Samuel Hoare on the platform with his clear-cut delicate features and his high forehead with its scanty fringe of hair. He spoke with scarcely any movements, using only his right hand to emphasize his statements, but this was done very gently. His voice sounded clearly in the complete silence of the Assembly. I could not help admiring his composure and self-control. His utterance was almost mechanical, so even and unchanging was the tone of his voice. There was no attempt at any emotional appeal nor did he jerk



HDARE

his body to and fro. From his thin lips the sentences fell without any of that contrast which would have played off one against the other. There was not the slightest sign of emotion or the least attempt to arouse it. The general impression which he made was one of straightforwardness which, in the opinion of Dr. Herzl, is Sir Samuel's leading characteristic. His speech was an exposé, a demonstration, an endeavour to convince in the simplest possible manner. The reception by the Assembly was very favourable, although the atmosphere of the meeting was uneasy rather than enthusiastic.

Sir Samuel declared that British policy, beyond all national self-seeking, identified itself with the League of Nations and the doctrine of collective security. He declared also the desire of his Government not to return to a system of alliances which had been found wanting. He added that the British Government was determined to throw the whole weight of its power into the balance of international peace and international order. He removed all ambiguity by stating that, of late, the spirit of war for the sake of war had revealed itself, and that responsibilities must be shouldered by all nations. The League, he said, would be what its members made of it; its force depended upon the will of its members. "My country," he added, "will not shirk its obligations. This task, however, with which Great Britain is prepared to identify herself, calls for composure"; and he went on to say that he would, with composure and without national self-seeking declare himself in favour of staunch resistance to any active aggression. Great Britain was ready to throw in her lot with the French doctrine of the whole pact and nothing but the

fact. Thus Great Britain produced the speech which had been awaited for eleven years. "Cases make law." The British national conscience had changed slowly but surely.

When Sir Samuel was leaving the hall at the end of the meeting, M. Herriot came up and cordially shook hands with him. "This," remarked M. Herriot, "is the answer to the speech which I myself made on the Covenant at Geneva in 1924, and France has been waiting for it ever since." Some English friends who happened to be there replied: "Sir Samuel Hoare's speech leaves you with at least fifty per cent of the old Covenant."

On the same day, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the Ethiopian delegate delivered a speech which, though simple, was by no means hackneyed, for he made appeals to God and displayed a deep concern for morality. He also demanded that an international commission of enquiry should be sent, and he was "willing to accept any reasonable suggestion". Altogether, the offer of Great Britain to hold all her resources in readiness to defend the international statute of collective security was regarded by all the nations at Geneva that evening as the high-light of the occasion.

In this momentous crisis M. Laval had the equally momentous task of settling the measures to be adopted by the League. It was very awkward for him that Great Britain's spontaneous offer to interpret Article 16 in the widest possible manner by means of concerted naval action and the use of sanctions should be directed against Italy of all nations.

When, on the following day, Italy refused to

consider any compromise or bargain whatsoever, there was nothing for it but to discuss the question of sanctions. All the nations at Geneva then realized that M. Laval's visit to Rome and the agreement which had been signed there were making it exceedingly difficult for France to decide upon the application of the covenant, whereas Great Britain for the first time was offering to interpret it in the widest possible manner. Dr. Beneš and M. Politis, the two main authorities from whom League opinion took its cue, paced up and down the lobbies, saying: "In Great Britain the law is established by precedent. It is therefore essential to adopt the English proposal whole-heartedly."

M. Laval on the other hand tried to gain time, and this led to a glut of misunderstandings between Great Britain and France. London made hasty preparations to dispatch the Home Fleet to the Mediterranean, where it began to concentrate from September 17th onwards. At the same time the British Government was anxious to apply the whole range of economic and financial sanctions to Italy, whose troops were preparing to encroach on Abyssinian territory.

At Paris the assurances which had been given to the Duce in the course of the conversation at the Farnese Palace were preventing the Quai d'Orsay from taking any action. For sixteen years France, in the face of all opposition, had unflinchingly conducted a League policy for the defence of the Covenant, and now, at the very moment when Great Britain had unreservedly joined her with a view to its application, France, to everyone's amazement, was shirking the issue. Even her traditional allies began to mistrust her.



London asked Paris point-blank the following question: "If the Home Fleet, acting on behalf of the League of Nations is attacked in the Mediterranean, can it depend upon the French fleet?" The Quai d'Orsay replied in a manner which did not imply assent, but which also did not allow its mental reservations to be regarded as a blank refusal. It was a fine example of hair-splitting. France was quite ready, but she could not accept responsibility for the possible effects of the sanctions taken against Italy, if the unanimous agreement of the Council of the League were not secured before the application of sanctions. The English became more and more eager for action. They felt that they had been trifled with.

As far as the French were concerned, the situation involved the possibility of a dramatic twist which Pertinax commented upon thus: "We might one day regret having established the principle that a consultation should take place before mutual assistance becomes operative against the aggressor. The approach to such a consultation would involve us in delay, and might well prove to our disadvantage in the case of a German attack on our country or allied countries."

What made matters worse was that we seemed to cast doubt upon the value of the pledge given by Great Britain. M. Laval caused an enquiry to be made in London whether, if our share in the British action in the Mediterranean were to cause German reactions in Czechoslovakia, Great Britain would be prepared to bear the consequent side by side with France.

In a speech which M. Laval delivered to his constituents at Clermont-Ferrand he said, speaking

for himself: "I should like to reassure French opinion. Those who are alarmed at the idea of military sanction can take my word for it that in my talks with the British Ministers such a possibility was never discussed."

French public opinion now showed signs of agitation and particularly of cleavage. Most of the inspired newspapers commented on the situation, without taking into account the commitments entered into by France at Geneva. In "L'Echo de Paris" M. Kerillis made so bold as to write: "Italy is not the first country to violate international treaties. What did we say to those who violated them before she did?" M. Lucien Romier handled the matter more diplomatically in the "Figaro" on September 24th, 1935, where he wrote: "To-day it is very obvious that French opinion is uneasy. Uneasy because the proceedings seem suddenly to hamper conciliation instead of facilitating it. Uneasy because, once the hard-and-fast principle underlying this logic, which the English themselves repudiated of old, is set in motion, nobody can tell where the responsibilities and the risks will end."

On October 3rd the Italian troops entered Abyssinian territory. On October 7th the League of Nations, for the first time since it had been established, decreed the application of sanctions. Great Britain had decided to apply passive sanctions to Italy. M. Laval was in favour of a progressive application, for he still cherished the hope that, before they could become effective, Italy having gained a few military successes, would take steps to arrange a compromise.

Signor Cerruti, Ambassador of the Duce in

Paris, paid several noteworthy visits to M. Laval, during which he made the statement that the oil sanction meant general warfare. M. Laval was anxious to gain time at any price. On October 13th he intervened with the British Government to delay the application of sanctions. The Press, for the greater part, continued to mislead public opinion and unwittingly to play into the hands of Italian blackmail and bluff.

"Partial or total, sanctions mean war"—such was the text of the sermon preached by the chief journalists of the Right. Other papers inspired in a greater measure from official quarters argued in favour of the dilatory policy of the Government.

The atmosphere at Geneva became painful and the breach between Great Britain and France made all international action impossible. From October 18th onwards, Great Britain, tired of the shilly-shallying of France, and unwilling to act alone, showed signs of preparing to withdraw.

In London the Government began to consider that it might be in their interests later on, when dealing with the signatories of Locarno and France in particular, not to be compelled to interpret Article 16 as widely as they had at first intended. Sir Samuel Hoare sent for Signor Grandi. He assured him that Great Britain had no wish to attack Fascism, to have recourse to a blockade and still less to military sanctions, and he added that, on the contrary, he was ready to seek an agreement with Mussolini.

On October 23rd Sir Samuel made a speech in the House of Commons on the Italo-Ethiopian conflict. He adopted a stern attitude towards

France. Great Britain would not forget that if the British Fleet had been compelled to abandon all action in the Mediterranean, if the Baldwin Government had been compelled to modify its attitude towards the Italo-Ethiopian conflict, it was because France had refused Great Britain the support which she ought to have supplied in accordance with Article 16 of the Covenant. In bitter terms Sir Samuel added that if this were to lead to a crisis it would at least be of some use, as it would enable them to distinguish which countries sincerely associated themselves with the idea of collective action, and those which only pretended to do so but in reality were not anxious for it. British public opinion, in its turn, accused France of never having regarded the League of Nations as anything else but an instrument devised to defend her against Germany.

In France public opinion, which had a very imperfect idea of what was going on, continued to support its Minister of Foreign Affairs. "His speeches and his diplomatic notes," said the members of his staff, "are exactly what they should be. There is not a word which needs crossing out; he is getting his Yellow Book ready." Meanwhile signs of opposition began to show themselves in Parliament. The sensible men in all the parties realized that our ambiguous diplomatic action had not only failed to settle the Ethiopian problem or to improve our relations with Italy, but it struck a fatal blow at an organization which until then had been the basis of French politics and the basis of French alliances and friendships.

At Geneva as a last resource the Council of the League instructed Great Britain and France to

draw up a scheme for conciliation which would be submitted to Italy.

After the English elections in the following November the British Government made its policy still more pliable. Sir Robert Vassittart came to Paris and helped to draw up a scheme of conciliation with which the League, as a last resort, could associate itself.

Sir Samuel Hoare also came to Paris where he had many talks with M. Laval. On the evening of December 8th, according to those with inside information, the British and French delegates had recognized that Italy might at any moment land Europe in a hopeless plight, and that Sir Samuel Hoare and M. Laval, most scrupulously taking this circumstance into account, had considerably widened the scope of the concessions to be granted to Italy.

The basis of the scheme was the exchange of territories between Abyssinia and Italy. The former would receive only the harbour of Assab on the coast of Italian Eritrea, but she was to hand over about 150,000 square miles to Italy. The Negus would thus be left with only the Amharic nucleus of his realm, and in addition he was to agree to a scheme of supervision by the League of Nations.

Mussolini, before he had even heard the details of the plan, declared before the Italian Senate that he would not accept any compromise which did not involve the recognition of Italian rights of sovereignty over the whole of Abyssinia. Accordingly, nobody was particularly surprised when he sent word to the Chancelleries that he rejected the Hoare-Laval plan.



HAILE SELASSIE

The effects which this produced in Great Britain added to the Franco-British tension. On December 18th Sir Samuel Hoare resigned. The deeply human appeal of the touching speech which he delivered in the House of Commons to explain the reasons which had led him to adopt an attitude of reconciliation had its counterpart in Mussolini's speech at Portofino. "Against us," he declared, "are ranged the hide-bound, selfish, insincere powers. But we have entered upon a stern struggle against this front and we shall wage it to the bitter end."

In France the truth was now revealed at last. The surrender of the traditional policy of agreement with Great Britain within the framework of the League caused serious misgivings. On January 22nd M. Herriot withdrew from a Cabinet whose foreign policy was diametrically opposed to his views. The Laval Cabinet had to resign.

What had its policy achieved? It had demonstrated at a heavy cost, that any agreement with Italy or Germany could be reached only if their ambitions were satisfied first. On the other hand, proof had been obtained that every kind of aggression would be possible. In spite of the League of Nations, if Great Britain and France did not continue to be close friends. The system on which the leading nations based their security had been upset, French security was impaired and the most steadfast friendships of France endangered.

In the United States of America the Senators, thoroughly disgusted by the "European muddle", forced the "Neutrality Act" upon President Roosevelt.

And so Italy and Germany emerged inflated from the conflict between the totalitarian doctrine and

democracy. Their policy of blackmail had worked. Hitler realized that there was nothing to stop him. For eighteen months he had been drafting his scheme for the remilitarization of the Rhine zone and now it was his turn to act.

#### CHAPTER IV

### RISE AND FALL OF A DEMOCRACY

When on January 23rd, 1936, M. Pierre Etienne Flandin became Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Sarraut cabinet, he imagined that if the international situation was at sixes and sevens it could be put right again. He thought that the allies and friends of France could still be brought back into the same fold.

He set about his task. Every day he received foreign ambassadors, ministers and statesmen. From the very beginning of his talks with them he realized how disturbed the international atmosphere had become as a result of the Ethiopian conflict and, particularly, of the divergency of the British and French opinions about it. The process of restoring order would have to begin in London.

The funeral of King George V on January 25th, 1936, provided him with an opportunity of sounding opinion in England. M. Flandin was particularly keen on getting into closer touch with London, because the Quai d'Orsay was much worried by the machinations of the Reich in the Rhine zone. Ever since the Doumergue-Barthou note of April 17th, 1934, by which the French Government had refused





FLANDIN

to agree to Germany's demands concerning rearmament, Hitler, encouraged by our weakness in the face of Italian aggression, had decided to defy the world and pursue a policy of rearmament which would "valorize" his diplomatic activities and which would involve the remilitarization of the Rhine zone.

The number of uniformed soldiers on leave in this area was continually on the increase. Secret agents reported that many officers in mufti were carrying on activities there. According to the regulations, the German authorities were supposed to apply for permission to enable military bands to attend local festivities in the demilitarized zone, but now they had begun to dispense with this formality.

From the early part of 1934 onwards it was becoming more and more evident that a remilitarization of the zone was close at hand. The pre-war barracks and also those which had been built during the Allied occupation and were now transformed into cheap flats or used as offices for the civil authorities, were evacuated and work was started on them. The French Ambassador in Berlin received instructions to lodge an enquiry with the Wilhelmstrasse. A negative reply was received to the effect that if certain barracks had been evacuated it was not because they were to be occupied by soldiers. The municipal authorities had assumed the responsibility for these changes. The Quai d'Orsay had to be satisfied with this answer. A little later on, some soldiers of the Reichswehr, who had been discharged after five or six years' service, produced their mobilization vouchers which included towns in the demilitarized zone among the centres where they were to rejoin.

The Quai d'Orsay again asked a question and the French Ambassador at Berlin, M. François-Poncet, again acted. He spoke to Hitler himself and



FRANÇOIS-PONCET

suggested to him the idea of negotiating the remilitarization. Hitler replied that the Reich certainly could not allow a demilitarization to

continue indefinitely which was an outrage to the independence of a great country. He added, however, that for the moment the German Government was concerned with other problems.

Matters were again left in abeyance, but German officials made a point of cautiously asking French travellers who happened to be at Berlin whether France would declare war if the German troops were to enter the Rhine zone. Everybody declared that she would. They pointed out that France had to put up with many infringements of the Treaty of Versailles, and would continue to do so for the sake of peace, but as regards the demilitarization of the Rhine zone, France would be adamant, precisely because of her desire for peace. She would mobilize, for it would be better to have war at once than to drift into a war later on. At Paris the diplomats declared that if the Reich were to reoccupy the demilitarized zone without negotiating, the danger would be enormous. Even if war were not declared the next day, it would unfailingly break out soon afterwards.

All these opinions were reported to the Wilhelmstrasse which also received the following advice from certain quarters: "Do not carry out the reoccupation violently and without negotiating; ask for a progressive reoccupation to cover five years for the infantry, and five additional years each for the small calibre artillery, then the heavy artillery and finally the air force respectively. If you proceed by gradual stages spread over 20 years all will be well." The French Ambassador associated himself with this point of view and urged the Germans to be cautious.

There are very good reasons for supposing that

at the beginning of 1935 the German General Staff had decided to adopt this method, as in their opinion it would be a long time before they could risk a successful war with France. They were pleased that France was showing herself so amenable towards them, and they made ready to start negotiations, although they continued to build new barracks in the zone just the same.

M. Laval, who at that period was President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs, was disappointed at the reply which Germany showed signs of making to his conciliatory attitude in the settlement of the Saar problem. He therefore commissioned M. François-Poncet to tell Hitler personally and also von Neurath that if the Reich were to reoccupy the demilitarized zone without negotiation, France would be compelled to take the most serious measures. This message was repeated at the end of December, 1935.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian business and the Franco-Russian pact made extensive changes in the international atmosphere. At Geneva, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, the democracies revealed their lack of agreement and also their weakness. French visitors to Berlin were now more modest in their talk, even at the Ambassador's dinner-table. They assured the Wilhelmstrasse officials who were sitting next to them that if the Reich were to reoccupy the Rhine zone France would do nothing. One of them repeated a remark made by a Cabinet Minister to a group of journalists: "The French will shoulder arms only for the defence of their frontiers." One person who had no official position but who was known to be in close touch with the Government in power,

actually said much the same thing to Hitler himself. This meddlesome behaviour led, in each case, to a protest from the French Ambassador, who saw the results of his own efforts seriously handicapped by such proceedings.

The day after the funeral of King George V, M. Flandin had a talk with Mr. Eden. The same evening Mr. Baldwin gave a private dinner party to which Mr. Eden and M. Flandin were invited. The latter, in the course of a general talk on the European situation, informed the British ministers of the alarm in France about German intentions in the Rhine zone. "What will be the attitude of the British Government in the face of this violation of the Locarno Pact by the Reich?" asked M. Flandin. Mr. Eden replied with another question. "What will the French Government do? Until we know that we cannot usefully discuss the British attitude."

On his return to Paris M. Flandin submitted the question to the Ministerial Council. "If the Rhine zone is violated will France be prepared to act? A reply must be given to Mr. Eden." The matter was discussed, but no conclusion was reached. There was a perfect flood, not of opinions, but of questions. What does our General Staff think about it? What will the Little Entente do? And the League of Nations? This unwillingness to express a personal view indicates how bewildered the minds of people had become through the change which had taken place in the line of French foreign policy during the previous eighteen months.

The next day a Supreme Military Committee met at the Ministry of War in the presence of the Minister of National Defence and M. Flandin.



EDEN

This meeting was followed by a Ministerial Council, in the course of which M. Flandin was given authority to inform the British Government that France was ready to act if Germany carried out her intentions. M. Flandin conveyed this statement to Mr. Eden at Geneva.

It seems obvious that somebody in Paris must have been indiscreet enough to inform the Wilhelmstrasse that the French and the British had agreed to adopt the same attitude should the Rhine zone be reoccupied. It is largely due to this indiscretion that the German Government then decided to bring things to a head recklessly. Previous to this it had been supposed in Berlin that the differences of opinion which had been revealed by the discussions at Geneva on the subject of Ethiopia would enable the Reich to make its preparations at leisure. The moment, however, that Germany heard of the understanding between London and Paris, she had reason to fear that any day she would find herself faced by a Franco-British joint plan of action which would greatly handicap her chances of success.

During that period von Hoesch, the German ambassador in London, was kept very busy. A prominent Austrian told me that on February 23th, 1936, he was lunching with von Hoesch who apparently knew for certain that the members of the British Government would do nothing if German troops entered the Rhineland. The German ambassador expressed the view that this was practically the same as tacitly giving permission to the Germans to remilitarize the Rhine zone, and he added that he had scored the most brilliant success in his career.



A Havas telegram dated February 21st reported on the attitude of British official circles, who apparently considered that no outside interference could possibly stop the Germans from reoccupying the Rhineland. The most that could be expected was that the British Government might view with favour an appeal to the League of Nations. The same telegram pointed out that opinion in Great Britain was far from enthusiastic about British unilateral commitments in Europe. If the telegram concluded, the Germans were to reoccupy the zone, Great Britain as a whole would not be inclined to treat the matter very seriously.

The plot thickened rapidly. From January to March 1936 German agents called at one embassy after another and declared that the Führer had not the slightest intention of reoccupying the Rhineland. They also stated that in any case he would negotiate. It seems hardly possible that they could have managed to mislead anyone. The French ambassador in Berlin was fully alive to the real intentions of the Germans, and at Paris there were plenty of reports on the activities of the German general staff. Nevertheless, in this way doubts were cast upon the value of these reports, and as a result there was a tendency to assume that the reoccupation was not so close at hand as had been alleged.

At the beginning of March the Olympic games were concluded at Garmisch in an atmosphere of international friendliness. An important Paris newspaper published an interview with the Führer in which he expressed his willingness to make conciliatory proposals, and in any case, to negotiate. This goodwill on the part of the Führer greatly



HITLER

impressed public opinion at Paris. M. Flandin was anxious to take advantage of this amiable mood, and he instructed M. François-Poncet to ask the Chancellor to state exactly what he had in mind. France was by all means ready to start negotiations with Germany.

When the Führer received M. François-Poncet, he seemed ill at ease. All the same, he gave him to understand that there was every hope of speedy negotiations. When taking leave of M. François-Poncet, however, he asked him to say nothing about their conversation. This request struck the French ambassador as odd.

In point of fact, the newspaper interview with the Führer had been prepared by his officials before he had made up his mind to reoccupy the Rhineland, and now that it was published, his decision might have to be held up.

On March 6th, 1936, a big military reception was held at the Soviet Embassy in Berlin. A film was to be shown there entitled "Russian Army Manœuvres in the Ukraine". The highest officers of the German general staff had accepted the invitation. All the foreign military attachés were present. The Spanish military attaché, Major Beigbeder, was accompanied by General Sanjurjo who was already discussing with the Reich the possibilities of a revolution in Spain. He was also buying armaments on credit. At a quarter past five the German generals sent a message to say that they were delayed by important discussions with the Chancellor, and they therefore suggested that it would be better to start without them. At six o'clock, when refreshments were being served, General Schmidt, the Belgian military attaché, took a friend of the French ambassador's

on one side and said to him: "At this very moment the reoccupation of the demilitarized zone is being settled. Tell your military attaché, and then come and let me know what you think about it." When the military attaché heard the news, he said: "Nonsense! The reoccupation of the Rhineland isn't as easy as that. It'll no doubt happen one day, but much later on. We haven't nearly reached that stage yet."

At Garmisch Hitler had let General Blomberg into the secret of his intention to occupy the Rhineland without previous notice and without negotiations. When the Chancellor explained his plan to the generals of the headquarters staff, one of the officers present, probably General Fritsch, rose and made objections. He urged that it would not be easy for the headquarters staff to accept responsibility for so risky a proceeding. The German army was being thoroughly overhauled and was not yet ready for war. It could be kept in check by the French army alone. There would obviously be an immediate counterstroke from France, all of whose army corps on the frontier would be on German territory even before the vanguard of the German army could reach Cologne. Hitler replied: "I am sorry to tell you that your information is all wrong. If you believe that the French army would start a campaign, you are much mistaken. Let me tell you that France won't move an inch, and that we can get going without the least fear. In fact, you needn't serve out any ammunition to your troops because they won't need to fire a single shot." The officer was still not quite satisfied and again remonstrated: "But suppose France were to launch an attack." "If France takes any countermeasures



SCHMIDT

on the evening of our entry into the Rhineland, I will commit suicide and you can give the order to withdraw."

The decision to reoccupy the Rhineland was made by the Chancellor, not only against the advice of the General Staff, but also contrary to the opinion of Dr. Schacht, who had likewise declared himself unfavourable to the idea. He was afraid of retaliatory economic and financial measures which Germany would be unable to withstand. It would appear that Hitler was upset because Dr. Schacht's view coincided with that of the General Staff. On the night of the 6th, and until the early hours of the 7th, he was still uncertain whether to let his repudiation of the Locarno Treaty be followed by military measures, but in the end his instinct prevailed.

On Friday, March 6th, at Paris the Hiras bulletin which appeared at 8.30 in the evening reported that the foreign ambassadors at Berlin had been summoned to attend the Wilhelmstrasse on the following day in order to hear a statement about Locarno.

On March 7th at 9 in the morning, MM. Sarraute, Flandin, Paul-Boncour, Maurin and Mandel met at the Ministry of the Interior. At 9.30 they were told that the German ambassador had brought a note to the Quai d'Orsay which would have to be translated. The French ministers were thus unable to begin their discussions until 11 o'clock. Meanwhile, von Neurath had received successively, between 10 o'clock and 10.30, the British and French ambassadors and the Belgian *Chargé d'Affaires*, in order to hand them the memorandums announcing both Germany's repudiation of the Locarno



PAUL-BONCOUR

Treaty and the reconquest of the Rhineland. However secret the deliberations of the French Ministers may have been, there were several accounts which tally closely enough to enable us to reconstruct the essential features of this critical meeting.

M. Flandin at first gave a general outline of the situation. Then, at his request, it was decided to send for the French ambassadors in Great Britain, Germany and Italy in order to hear what they had to say about the situation. It was likewise decided that a plan of joint action would at once be discussed with England and the other signatories of Locarno, the Belgians and the Italians.

In the afternoon, a note from London informed the Quai d'Orsay that the British Government urged France not to make any irrevocable decision before the meeting of the Locarno signatories with which the British Government fully associated itself. This attitude on the part of England accordingly made it necessary for France to gain time. The next day, March 4th, a Ministerial Council was held at the Élysée under the presidency of M. Albert Lebrun. M. Flandin again outlined the situation in full and explained the attitude adopted by Great Britain. It then became necessary to decide whether France should take any steps before the meeting of the Locarno signatories which was to be held forthwith at Paris.

M. Mandel, who otherwise never took an active part at the meetings of the Ministerial Council, then asked whether France regarded the violation of the Rhineland as an act of war and whether she would retaliate accordingly or only draw up formal protests. A very long debate then followed, as a result of which it was decided that France should



do nothing without Great Britain. M. Flandin next arranged for the advance discussion of the steps which France might have to take after the meeting of the Locarno signatories. The discussion was concerned with whether a partial or general mobilization would be opportune. It was decided to recall only the African troops who were stationed in various parts of the South of France, and to send them to the eastern frontiers; troops would occupy the military works of the Maginot line; men belonging to all the army corps on the frontier would be recalled from leave and the corps would hold themselves in readiness for any emergency.

M. Flandin with the emphatic support of MM. Albert Lebrun, Paul-Boncour and Mandel, finally secured from the Ministerial Council the necessary authority to bring forward a resolution at the conference of the Locarno signatories, which was to take place at once at the Quai d'Orsay, that there should be immediate military action, for all the risks of which France would accept responsibility.

In the evening, M. Albert Sarraut made an appeal to French public opinion by means of a wireless talk. He emphasized the fact that the German guns now had Strasbourg within their range, and insisted that under such conditions negotiation was impossible. The same night M. Sarraut held a meeting in his own home with the three Ministers of National Defence and the chiefs of their General Staffs. The President of the Council was anxious to discuss with them the possibilities of military action, which he personally was disposed to adopt. The meeting lasted until long after mid-

night. M. Sarraut came up against various objections. In particular, he was reminded how difficult it would be to arrange for this sudden operation irrespective of all its possible results. Moreover, it was urged, an operation of this kind might lead to the mobilization of several thousand Frenchmen.

Unfortunately the Press also did not offer unanimous support to the governmental demand for



SARRAUT

strong action. The newspapers of the Right, even the ones which were supposed to obtain their information from military circles, raised serious objections and this attitude helped to cause misgivings on all sides. It is true that the elections were near. It was expected that they would take place in the following month, and the parties both of the

Right and of the Left were anxious in the course of the electoral struggles that their candidates should not be reproached with having wanted to run the risk of war. German propaganda, too, was making the most of its opportunities. Day by day, it hinted, Frenchmen were more and more coming round to the point of view that, after all, the territory which the troops of the Reich were occupying was not French.

M. Flandin has frequently told close friends of his that French opinion had never before shown itself so divided at a critical juncture. The Government was unable to take any action, as it lacked the support both of public and international opinion. Even its members were not as united as they should have been in the face of so momentous an issue.

The entry of the German troops into the Rhineland passed off without a hitch. On March 7th at noon the first detachments reached the demilitarized zone. The occupation was carried out in a desultory manner: companies could not find their battalions, and battalions had to search for their regiments. In spite of the building operations to which we have referred, the accommodation for the troops was not ready. This latter circumstance shows beyond any doubt how hasty the final military decisions had been. Eye-witnesses have also provided reliable evidence that not a single round of cartridge had been issued to the infantry and not a single shell to the artillery. The aircraft, though equipped with machine-guns, had no ammunition.

To soothe international feeling and to keep Great Britain in an expectant attitude, Hitler promised that the Rhineland effectives would remain at the

same strength for a definite period. In reality, reinforcements were added every week.

On the day after the German troops had entered the Rhine zone, there was a meeting of the Chamber of Deputies. M. Sarraut made a very guarded and dignified speech. In the lobbies the sole concern of the nationalists was to utilize the occurrence as a means of discrediting the Franco-Russian pact, the ratification of which, they alleged, was the cause of all the trouble.

On Thursday, March 12th, the weekly periodical "Candidé" published a startling editorial, in which the following remarks were addressed to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs:

"As recently as January 23rd we pointed out that the ratification of the Franco-Russian alliance would automatically be followed by the remilitarization of the left bank of the Rhine. But you had the Franco-Russian pact on the brain. For the last three months you have been trying to starve Italy. You are treating Mussolini as an outcast. You are advocating revolution against him. You are a scoundrel. Clear out!"

As for the Socialists, they suggested that perhaps the time had now come to make another attempt at disarmament.

The meeting of the Locarno signatories was held at the Quai d'Orsay. Lord Halifax had been appointed to second Mr. Eden who, the British Cabinet feared, might act recklessly if left to himself. M. van Zeeland and the Italian Ambassador at Paris were present at the meeting. M. Flandin with the assistance of MM. Paul-Boncour and Léger presided. He made an urgent appeal to the Locarno states



HALIFAX

for solidarity, and explained at some length how all the reports received at the Quai d'Orsay agreed that Germany was by no means ready for the adventure into which Hitler had plunged her, and that if she were to come up against the united will of the Locarno states she would hardly be inclined to carry the matter any further. M. Flandin concluded by saying that if the Locarno states, after having placed on record the fact that Germany had infringed the Treaty of Locarno, were to authorize France to take firm military measures on the day before the Ministerial Council met, the international situation might be at once put straight.

M. Flandin's statement produced a deep impression on all the delegates, and they suggested that, considering how serious the situation was, they ought to consult their respective governments, but before even the replies had reached Paris, the "drama of March 7th" was over. The French Government had decided to take action and even to do so alone, if the Locarno states had given her the necessary authority, but as there had been no time for such authority to be granted, France was compelled to fall in with the wishes of Great Britain, Italy and Belgium, if she did not want to forfeit the advantage of the international guarantees which she still derived from the Locarno Pact.

A few hours later on, Mr. Eden informed M. Flandin that the British Government wanted the Council of the League to be summoned beforehand, as this body, under the terms of the Locarno Pact, was alone competent to deal with any infringement by one of its signatories. M. Flandin then communicated this wish to the French Government,

together with the additional request of Great Britain that the meeting of the Council should take place at London and not at Geneva. This was agreed to, and M. Flandin was authorized by the Ministerial Council to suggest at London that the whole of the French forces should be placed at the disposal of the League if the latter agreed to authorize France to enforce the Locarno Treaty.

During the discussions of the French Ministerial Council many differences of opinion were revealed. In particular, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs was reminded of the need for great caution if international opinion did not show approval of the French initiatives. It was further pointed out that public opinion in France was scarcely of a kind to encourage the British Government to take the lead.

M. Flandin left for London on March 12th. Those Frenchmen who took part in the discussions in London still remember sadly how isolated the French delegation was from the very outset. The British Cabinet for the greater part showed an almost hostile reserve. The British Ministers still remembered the attitude of the previous French Cabinet, and showed little eagerness to fulfil the obligations of the Locarno Pact and even those of the Covenant of the League, for the disregard of which in the Italo-Abyssinian conflict they held France responsible. The commitments under the terms of the Locarno treaty had, incidentally, been forgotten by most of the public. The French Government itself was disposed to think that the infringement of Locarno by Germany released the other signatories of the treaty from their obligations. The whole of public opinion in the United Kingdom

tended to stiffen the Government's attitude in this respect, in view of the fact that under the terms of Article 1 and Article 4 of the treaty of Locarno Great Britain would be compelled to give military assistance to France.

Meanwhile, in the background, the Germans realized that the French parties of the Right were playing into their hands. They therefore borrowed the arguments which were being used by these parties, and enlarged upon them. They denounced the Franco-Russian alliance as being the cause of all the trouble, and they asserted that if England had to choose between Hitler and Stalin she certainly would choose the Führer.

Public opinion at London was moving in a direction unfavourable to France and the League. It was considered that it would be to Great Britain's advantage if she were released from the commitments on the Continent which she had undertaken at Locarno. Members of Parliament were being snowed under by letters from their constituents insisting that Great Britain should come to terms with Hitler and thus establish a lasting peace in Europe. The average Englishmen considered that as the infringement of Locarno had not been followed by war, it was of no great importance and would hardly involve sanctions similar to those which were rendered necessary by Italian aggression in Abyssinia.

At the British Cabinet Council which had preceded the arrival of the French delegation, Mr. Eden had made a stirring appeal to his government to support the French arguments. He had been seconded only by Mr. Chamberlain. The other ministers had been afraid of "reactions in the



City", for the City was involved in a large number of German transactions.

When the meeting with the French delegates took place, Mr. Baldwin, after having heard what M. Flandin had to say, urged him to remember that until Great Britain had completely rearmcd, they were unwilling to run the slightest risk of war. No wonder MM. Flandin, Paul-Boncour and their staff looked worried whenever we saw them moving about amid the fashionable crowd at the Savoy Hotel. They now knew that they would not even secure the withdrawal of the German troops from the demilitarized zone. The Belgians followed closely the lead of Great Britain. Every day M. van Zeeland tried to discover fresh methods of compromise which would not compromise him personally.

Col. Beck, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, was also not at all inclined to commit his country to anything. He told M. Flandin that Poland could not defend the Locarno Pact which had been negotiated by France without consulting Poland. The fact was that the Allies and the friends of France had inferred from the French default in the Mediterranean after Italian aggression in Ethiopia, and still more after the "German aggression", that collective security was regarded in Paris as a unilateral obligation. Hence it would be better to reach an agreement with Germany. What about Italy? Surely she was on the side of France. Was it not for her that France had disregarded her obligations? Signor Grandi's reply was reasonable enough. He said: "We cannot help you if you apply sanctions to Germany, since we ourselves are the object of sanctions. But morally we will support



2011

VAN ZEELAND

you." M. Flandin rendered a tribute to M. Litvinoff the delegate of Soviet Russia, who identified himself with France unreservedly on every occasion.

M. Flandin had two courses open to him: either France would act alone in the Rhineland or else France would endeavour to construct a new agreement with Great Britain on the ruins of Locarno. M. Flandin decided to adopt the latter course.

While the previous cabinet had been in power, the French themselves had somewhat doubted the value of their traditional policy of collective security based upon the Covenant of the League. The allies and friends of France made this an excuse for restricting their own commitments, and for seeking their security by a direct agreement with Germany and Italy. As M. Flandin put it: "In the eyes of British opinion, which was badly informed and unfavourably impressed by the events at the League of Nations during the previous year, the position of France was such that I decided, alone and on my own responsibility, to transform the guarantees in the Locarno Pact, the odds of which were in favour of France alone, into a bilateral Franco-British guarantee which, at any other time, would have been termed a military defensive alliance. Thus would evidence be given that France was ready to defend those who would defend her."

M. Flandin added that he had great difficulty in securing the co-operation of the General Staffs which, in his opinion, it was essential to include explicitly in the agreements. And in the end he gained his point. The consent of the British Cabinet was obtained in the course of the noteworthy session on March 18th, which continued at the Foreign Office until three in the morning. The agreement

assumed concrete form as a White Paper. Actually, it was the first formal commitment which Great Britain had undertaken since the war. No sooner had Mr. Eden signed the document than he became anxious as to whether it would be ratified by Parliament. He asked M. Flandin to restrain from rejoicing too openly on his return to Paris, and, in particular, not to make any definite statement to the Chamber of Deputies on the precise scope of the White Paper, as these agreements might be misunderstood by opinion in Great Britain. In recalling those anxious days M. Flandin always mentions that his happiest hours were spent during a week-end visit, when he had an opportunity of becoming closely acquainted with Mr. Neville Chamberlain, of whose sympathy and understanding he speaks in the highest terms.

The Franco-British agreement had been renewed under conditions which enabled it to discover again its intrinsic value, irrespective of what might happen to the Covenant of the League.

The following year, the Association of Journalists attached to the League of Nations entertained M. Nahas Pasha, the Egyptian Prime Minister at a luncheon, when his country joined the League. On this occasion I sat next to Mr. Eden who asked after M. Flandin. He added:

"You ought to be very grateful to him. He is the man who, on the ruins of the Peace Treaties, laid the foundations of a new and closer co-operation between France and Great Britain. When he came to London he deserved great credit for having understood the trend of British public opinion which was opposed to any general commitment."

At Berlin the news of the signature of the White

Paper caused much concern. It was hoped there that the British signature was intended only as a means of preventing France from acting alone in Europe. The Germans felt quite certain, too, that the agreement would not be followed by any discussions between the General Staffs.

What France really did on March 7th was to sacrifice a form of words, the purport of which she had rendered of no avail at the time of the Abyssinian conflict, in favour of that reality which was the maintenance of a close agreement with Great Britain.

If, moreover, we take the trouble to trace effects back to their original causes, we shall discover that the French attitude on March 7th was due to the non-committal nature of British diplomacy in certain particulars, and that this, in its turn, was the direct result of French doubts as to the value of the Covenant of the League at the time of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict.

Finally, it may be said that March 7th enabled France to set on foot a new policy which possessed the merit of sweeping away the Franco-British misunderstanding, and of replacing the shaky structure of collective security, the first damage to which was the result of M. Laval's blundering tactics, by a system of limited and separate agreements.

## CHAPTER V

### ATTACHMENTS TO BEWARE OF

FROM 1922 to 1936 Mussolini wavered between two alternatives as a basis for his foreign policy. Was

it to be an agreement with Great Britain and France, or closer relations with Germany? In both cases, all that the Duce was really aiming at was to secure the maximum of advantages from London and Paris. The only difference was that if he adopted the former plan he would achieve his purpose by means of negotiations, while if he decided on the second alternative he would make use of blackmail and bullying. Even before he came into power Mussolini expounded the points at issue here. On the eve of the Geneva conference, when he was still a journalist, he wrote an article to the *Garachia* containing the following passage:

"There can be no doubt that, at the present day, the axis of European history passes through Berlin. In the contest between Germany and the Powers, Italy's share may be a decisive one. Before making up her mind, Italy must scrutinize the German problem in order to become acquainted with its true aspect. For the moment, Italy should adopt the British point of view. Germany must be granted a moratorium for her payments, but as soon as possible a guarantee pact must be concluded against her and she must be made to pay."

After the march on Rome in 1922 Mussolini continued to be anti-German. The first step he took in foreign affairs was to reject the proposals of Mr. Bonar Law, then Prime Minister of Great Britain, who was anxious for closer relations with Berlin. Instead of agreeing to this, Mussolini associated himself with the policy of M. Poincaré which was tending towards the occupation of the Ruhr. It is true that M. Poincaré had already paid the price for this support, by helping at Geneva to make it possible for the Italian bombardment of

Corfu to be settled on terms extremely advantageous to Italian prestige.

It was about this time that an amusing incident occurred which throws light upon the relations then existing between Germany and Italy. The following details were published by *Il Mondo*, in spite of the Fascist censorship which at that period was still feeling its way :

Through his secret service agents Mussolini had discovered that in the German Embassy at Rome, locked away in a safe, there was a large leather dispatch-case containing documentary proof of the German Ambassador's secret dealings with prominent Italians. The German Ambassador, Baron von Neurath, had, however, been informed by members of his private intelligence service that Mussolini had arranged for some of his henchings, with the help of duplicate keys, to break into the Embassy at night, to open the safe and get hold of the precious dispatch-case. Baron von Neurath removed the tempting documents from the dispatch-case and replaced them with pieces of blank paper. Then, at the appropriate time he, together with the whole of the Embassy staff which had been armed, waited for the arrival of the burglars. At two o'clock in the morning a door opened, and two muffled figures crept in. They opened the safe and took the large dispatch-case. They were immediately surrounded, tied up and disarmed. A man who was waiting for them in the street managed to get away. When the two burglars were searched they turned out to be no other than two officials of the Italian Government, a lieutenant of the military police and a police superintendent. The next day the German Ambassador informed police headquarters that his



NEURATE



residence had been burgled, but that he could hand over the culprits to nobody except to a representative of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The latter accordingly directed Signor Costantini, the Secretary-General of the Ministry, to settle the unfortunate occurrence as best he could. Baron von Neurath kept quiet about it and this gave him a hold over Mussolini of which he took due advantage. Even when Signor Costantini fell into disgrace he never breathed a word about this incident, which provides an edifying example of the diplomatic methods favoured by Rome and Berlin.

Italo-German relations were often influenced, too, by the tendency of the Weimar Republic to pursue a democratic line of policy. Nevertheless, as late as 1932, Mussolini stated in an interview which he granted to M. Jules Sauerwein, that "nothing but an alliance of France, Italy, Belgium and Germany can place European peace on a firm footing again".

Neither Great Britain nor France showed any inclination to pay any heed to this goodwill on the part of Rome. The economic, political and military weakness of Germany at this period deprived it of any great value, and in any case did not justify the colonial concessions which Italy expected, and which would have provided a troublesome precedent for German claims later on.

What Mussolini now aimed at was to help Germany to obtain the "strong" government which would become a source of concern to France and Great Britain. The Duce therefore kept a careful watch on the Nazi movement which was making rapid progress throughout the Reich. Long before Hitler came into power the greater part of his

benchmen were in close touch with the leaders of the Fascist party.

The activity of which the Brown House in Munich was the main centre received considerable encouragement from the Duce from 1930 until January 30th, 1933. As soon as Hitler came into power he realized that this friendly attitude on the part of Italy might be very useful to him. He accordingly gave Mussolini a formal assurance that in no case would Germany claim the Southern Tyrol. In his big speech in the Reichstag on January 30th, 1934, Hitler particularly mentioned that, as regards foreign policy, he could not help expressing his satisfaction that the traditional friendship between National Socialism and Fascist Italy had, that year, established itself even more firmly in Germany.

Nevertheless Mussolini was unwilling to commit himself too far. The only purpose of this dalliance with Berlin was to have a means of bringing pressure to bear upon his former allies. Moreover, he recalled what Prince von Bülow had said: "The Allies may have won the first round, but it will be impossible to say who really won the war until we know who comes out on top at Vienna."

That was the period when Nazi propaganda in Austria was just beginning. It sought to achieve its ends by hook or by crook, and before long terrorism was rife at Vienna. The government of Dr. Dollfuss then considered that an agreement with Italy might protect them against German ambitions.

Those in close touch with Hitler advised him to arrange with Mussolini the conditions under which he would agree not to interfere in Austria. The two dictators met at Venice and were disappointed with each other. The Führer gave the Duce the requisite



EDWARDS

assurances concerning Austria but he did so in a very half-hearted manner. At the official dinner Hitler sat next to Dr. Scavich, Under-Secretary of State in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who is a native of Trieste and speaks German perfectly. During the meal Hitler did nothing but find fault with the Austrian Government. Towards the end of the meal Dr. Scavich said to him with a smile: "You and I are really unchallenger: both of us are bad Austrians."

On July 25th, 1934, Chancellor Dollfuss was brutally assassinated, and it was impossible not to see that Germany had a hand in this vile outrage. Mussolini immediately massed several divisions on the Brenner. The German counter-espionage agents intercepted a diplomatic Italian message which, when deciphered, ran as follows: "If the Nazi action develops in a manner to threaten Austria the Italian Army should enter Austria and move towards Munich." This intercepted message saved Austria. Germany was not ready to undertake a war even with Italy.

Until the Abyssinian war the tension between Italy and Germany was continually on the increase. On the occasion of the fair at Bari, Mussolini, in his customary manner, made a blustering speech in which with great effrontery he emphasized the superiority of the Latin to the Germanic civilization.

Accordingly, when Germany on March 16th, 1935, repudiated the military clauses of the Versailles Peace Treaty, Great Britain and France considered it a fitting occasion to call a conference at Stresa for the purpose of "deciding on a joint Franco-British-Italian policy towards returned Germany". M. Laval's trip to Rome had prepared the ground favourably.

Mussolini was uneasy at the progress made by German penetration in Central Europe. Not long before, the Hungarian elections had resulted in a majority for the Gömbös government, and had thus shown how successful German propaganda and diplomacy had been in the Danube basin. The Duce was ready to co-operate with Great Britain and France in the interests of Austrian independence which he wanted to safeguard as a medium for bargaining with Berlin.

At the Stresa meeting on April 11th, Mussolini delivered a long speech in which he carefully refrained from saying anything definite. He made a rather luke-warm plea for Austria's right to remain in the interests of her territorial integrity, on behalf of which Italy, he asserted, was ready to co-operate, under the auspices of Great Britain, with the other Powers concerned.

In the name of Great Britain Sir John Simon thanked the Duce, but left him guessing. Mussolini thereupon promised to arrange a meeting at Rome on the 20th of the following month, to which all the Succession States of former Austria-Hungary would be invited. This conference would explore the possibility of concluding bilateral agreements for the maintenance of the status quo in Central Europe. The Duce then asked Sir John Simon to sound Germany as to her intentions regarding Austria.

The communiqué, however, which was issued as a sequel to the Stresa meeting did not grant Mussolini the concessions which he had expected.

A few months later Italy let loose her attack on Abyssinia, thus deliberately violating international laws and defying fifty-two nations. It was a risky move, for if the League had shown sufficient will-

power to apply sanctions in full against the aggressor, Germany alone could have saved Italy. Such were the psychological conditions which brought the Rome-Berlin axis into existence.

Germany had two courses open to her. She could either take advantage of the fact that Italy was hampered by the Abyssinian campaign and penalized by the League, to extend her activities in Central Europe and finally destroy Italian influence there, or on the contrary, she could gain the goodwill of the Italians by maintaining a benevolent neutrality towards them, or even giving surreptitious support to their designs in the Mediterranean.

Hitler decided to adopt the second alternative. In his opinion, it had the advantage of leaving him more latitude on the Rhine and in Central Europe. The interests of Great Britain and France, he argued, traded in different directions, the former being concerned mainly about the Mediterranean, while the latter was thinking in terms of the Rhineland. He was right, and on March 7th, 1936, he was able to send his troops to reoccupy the Rhineland. The longer the Abyssinian war lasted, the firmer became the Italo-German friendship.

In London and Paris it was imagined that the Austrian question would nevertheless stand in the way of any real agreement between Italy and Germany for a long time to come. The war in Abyssinia, however, left Austria at the tender mercies of Germany, now that the Italian counterpoise had been suddenly removed.

It was about this time that Sir Austen Chamberlain came to Vienna and urged the Austrians not to pin their faith any longer in Italy, but to try and get on good terms with Germany. After some hesitation,



8CHUSCHN100

Chancellor Schuschnigg proceeded to Rome, where Mussolini himself informed him that he would welcome it if the tension between Austria and Germany were relaxed. Austria thus had no alternative but to make overtures to Germany. Secret conversations were immediately started at Vienna between Dr. Guido Schmidt and von Papen, the German ambassador, and they resulted in an agreement on principle. Chancellor Schuschnigg and Dr. Schmidt at once conveyed the news to Mussolini, who was then at Rocca delle Caminate, his private estate. The Duce expressed his willingness to associate himself with any formula which would save the face of Vienna, and which, though seeming so safeguard Austrian independence, would do so under conditions involving what practically amounted to an "Anschluss". As a pledge to Berlin he dismissed Dr. Suritch, the head of his department for Foreign Affairs who was known to be not very partial to Germany, and replaced him by his son-in-law, Count Ciano, who showed greater adaptability towards his father-in-law's back-slidings and shufflings.

The Austro-German agreement was signed at Vienna with the Duce's "blessing" on July 11th, 1936. The Austrian question was settled between the two countries.

On October 19th, 1936, Count Ciano left for Munich and Berlin. After his talk with Baron von Neurath, the chancelleries all felt certain that Italy would join Germany. Although the secret of the agreement was jealously guarded at the time, we now know that it provided for the following :

1. Parallel action of Italy and Germany in Spain.





GIANO

2. Identity of attitude at Geneva, Germany undertaking not to return to the League until Italy received satisfactory recognition of her Abyssinian conquest.
3. Identity of attitude as regards the new Rhineland pact which was to be settled. The two countries undertook not to negotiate separately, and in any case to negotiate only within the scope of limited commitments which would exclude the allies and friends of France.

A few days later, on November 2nd, Mussolini made a speech at Milan which revealed the full scope of the agreement now in force. For the first time he referred to the "Rome-Berlin axis", and in order to impress it upon the world at large, he imparted an unusual amount of pomp to the setting of his speech. A large crowd carrying hundreds of pennants and banners swarmed on the Cathedral Square at Milan which was decorated with huge inscriptions and Italian flags. The Cathedral was festooned with vast hangings of red velvet adorned with ribbons in three colours and bearing in the middle this inscription: "*Jesus who leddest away over the centuries, grant long years of triumph unto Italy and her Duce, that the civilization of the world may draw eternal light from Christian Rome.*"

Italian national anthems alternated with "Deutschland über Alles" and the "Hoch Wessal Lied", and uniformed delegates of Hitlerite organizations abroad were installed in places of honour. Mussolini, outroaring the frenzied cheers, bellowed: "There is a great country which has recently drawn to itself the powerful sympathies of the Italian people. I refer to Germany. The meetings at Berlin have resulted in an agreement between the

two countries on specific problems, of which some are particularly crucial. Germany did not associate herself with sanctions, although urged on all sides to do so."

The policy of blackmail, practised jointly by Italy and Germany, might well lead, it was hoped, to the isolation of London and Paris, or it might induce them, if possible in opposition to each other, to join in the scheme of a Pact of Four which would enable the dictators in charge of it to play fast and loose with them, or to discredit them with Soviet Russia. The Central European and Balkan allies and friends of Great Britain and France, left thus to themselves, would of their own accord drift towards the Rome-Berlin axis in the hope of finding some measure of security there.

This scheme was put speedily into effect. On November 6th Berlin signed an agreement with Tokyo against Communism. What Germany really aimed at was to thrust Russia away from Europe, more particularly from France, and at the same time to make sure of her encirclement. Japan's concern was to counteract the effects of Russia who, in China, showed signs of thwarting the Japanese dream of conquest and supremacy. Germany who, prompted by the Kaiser, had once urged a European crusade against the "yellow peril", was now an accessory after the fact to the crime of aiding and abetting Japanese supremacy in Asia, and Rome, the cradle of Latin civilization, was soon to become Germany's accomplice in this.

Mussolini now showed himself more and more anxious to please Hitler. He championed his colonial claims: he egged him on to tighten his

encroachment of Russia; he proclaimed the willingness of Italy to withdraw in favour of Germany both as regards Czechoslovakia and Austria. Then, having given these guarantees, he sought German co-operation in the Spanish adventure which he harkened after as the essential starting-point of his expansion in the Mediterranean area. Berlin lent a ready ear to these suggestions. Since 1930 a movement had been on foot to bring Spain and Germany closer together, much on the same lines as the Kaiser had urged.

The works of Professor Herre and those of militant Nazis such as Manfred Sell and Major Rohde who had been members of the Party from the very beginning, abounded in arguments such as:

"Confronted by a Spain which could look to Germany for support, France would have to keep her distance."

Or again:

"Spain, which extends on both sides of Gibraltar, is able, by Coruna, Ferrol and the Canary Islands in the Atlantic, and the Balearic Islands and Cartagena in the Mediterranean, to cut off all the sea routes of France."

Major Rohde's book, which was issued by Mütler, the Reichswerke publisher, contains the following significant remarks:

"The strategic naval importance of the Balearic Islands bids fair to increase in the future, especially when the scheme for a canal between Bordeaux and Narbonne has been carried out. This strategic position gives Spain, with Cartagena, Cadix, the northern shores of Morocco, Ferrol and the Canary Islands, a military advantage all the greater in the west because, in the eventuality of an Italo-French

conflict, Spain possesses land forces which are by no means negligible."

When Hitler came into power a German military periodical began to appear in a Spanish edition entitled: "Ejército, Marina, Aviación", and it was published by the same firm as the "Deutsche Wehr", the official organ of the German General Staff. The founder of this periodical was General Wilhelm Fangel who later became the representative of the Reich with Franco, and his contributors comprised the foremost officers and military writers in Germany. It was there that Franco came across plenty of hints on how to run a rebellion. In particular he took to heart this advice: "From the very start seize not only the Canary Islands, but also the Spanish possessions in Western Morocco, Ifni and Rio de Oro, which are strategic centres of the utmost importance against France."

The official relations between Germany and the Spanish Republic became undiguededly strained after the collapse of the Weimar Republic. Hitler had extended an icy welcome to the Spanish Ambassador Luis de Zulueta when he paid his ceremonial visit to the German Chancellor in October 1933.

The victory of the Right parties at the Spanish elections in November 1933 had aroused great hopes in Germany. Señor Gil Robles, head of the Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right Parties was a notorious pro-German. He attended the National Socialist Congress at Nuremberg in 1934 and was welcomed there with open arms. As a result of this, in 1937, when the civil war was at its height, and the rebels were faring very badly, he felt himself justified in approaching Chancellor Hitler

for an interview, which was a secret one, but the purpose of which can easily be guessed.

(In 1914, by the way, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, head of the "Spanish Phalanx", a fighting formation of the extreme Right, was also the guest of the German Government at the Kaiserhof Hotel where only distinguished visitors stayed.)

Señor Luis de Zulueta reported these matters to Madrid, but nothing was done about them and he resigned. He was replaced by Señor Agramonte, the Spanish Minister in Prague. Señor Agramonte's views made him amenable to the offer which he received from Hitler on presenting his credentials in March 1935. This involved nothing more or less than complete support from Germany for the reactionary government at Madrid in its struggle against any attempt at a democratic movement in Spain. Baron von Neurath had previously informed Señor Agramonte that Germany felt serious alarm at the Franco-Soviet pact, the signature of which was imminent, for it would mean a great increase of communist propaganda in France and all the adjacent countries. Señor Agramonte saw Hitler again on several occasions. He became a close friend of Herr Ribbentrop and he attended the congress at Hamburg in 1935. It was through him that Captain Agaciso was appointed naval attaché at the Spanish Embassy in Berlin. Captain Agaciso, a monarchist and a pro-German, was in the same close touch with the German Naval General Staff as Lieut.-Colonel Martínez was with the military General Staff of the Reich.

General Sanjurjo, who was already marked out to be head of the rebellion, proceeded to Germany in the first half of February 1936. He made this



BIBENTROP

journey during the time of the winter Olympic Games, and it was represented as an ordinary pleasure trip. But although General Sanjurjo went to Garmisch, he also visited the German munition factories and placed large orders with them. Moreover, he had many talks with Hitler, Hess, and Ribbentrop, as well as with Generals Blomberg, Fritsch and Beck. In the course of this visit a decision was reached as to the manner in which Germany would supply help to the Spanish Generals against the Republic. When the plot started, Señor Agramonte tendered his resignation as ambassador and also transmitted a copy of his letter of resignation to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs—a proceeding which is without parallel in diplomatic records.

When Franco started the revolt in Morocco, General Sanjurjo was in Lisbon waiting for events to come to a head. Sanjurjo left for the south of Spain by air, as he had arranged with the other rebel generals, but the plane in which he was travelling crashed, and he was killed. Among the papers found on him was a draft treaty between Spain and Germany, the general principles of which had been arranged during Count Ciano's visit to Berlin in the previous November. Its purpose was to renew and extend the treaty of 1926 which had lapsed when the Spanish Republic came into existence. The Italian headquarters were to be established at Port Mahon on the island of Minorca. Germany was to assist in the organization of this base and to enjoy the same rights there as Italy.

As a matter of fact, at the beginning of the insurrection, the Germans were far more active in Spain than the Italians. Official documents which



were seized in various consulates make it clear that the Reich was maintaining 25 different organisations in Spain. The chief of them consisted of the National Socialist party's foreign group and the Spanish section of the labour front, which extended over a network of more than 30 centres. Each of these bodies had at its disposal a special agent of the Gestapo and spies in the chief business and banking concerns. The diplomatic and consular representatives of the Reich flooded the country with propagandist pamphlets. Herr Carlos Henrique Fricks, the German consul at Carthagena, who had served German interests in Spain during the Great War, kept in touch with the propaganda department in Berlin, and in particular with the Fichtebund, which concentrates on propaganda against the Versailles Peace Treaty and the restoration of the German colonies.

In the same way, Germany tampered wholesale with the Spanish press. These activities were directed by a gentleman known as "Gustav Roder" who in one of his reports announced that, in the month of September 1935 alone, the Spanish newspapers had published 145 articles favourable to Hitler's Germany. He also reported that the "Informaciones", a newspaper owned by the famous Juan March who financed the rebellion and supported the policy of Oil Robles, "may be regarded as the mouthpiece of Germany".

The delivery of arms to the rebels had been organized by a former officer of the German army named Guns. He had carried on this work with the help of Señor Malibran, a Spanish officer who was employed at the Ministry of War, and also of former German officers who, like Guns himself,

masqueraded as agents of German shipping companies. Among them may be mentioned Kindler at Alicante, Petersen at Malaga and Hans Heinrich Hoffmann at Ceuta.

During the spring of 1936 this smuggling organization handled more than 38,000 rifles and 18,000 revolvers. Its activities were camouflaged mostly as dealings in potatoes. Thus, on July 15th, 1936, Lieutenant D. Miguel sold 25 sacks of potatoes (i.e. 2,500 rifles) to Señor Toetres, a lawyer belonging to the "Restoration Club" and acting on behalf of the Flamingo Restaurant in the Calle Carmen.

The civil war had been organized in such detail by Germany and Italy that they both felt certain that within three weeks a dictatorial government, entirely under the thumb of Berlin and Rome, would oust the Republican Government of Madrid. They also imagined that it would be easy to prevent Great Britain and France from maintaining the communications with their Colonies. The governments at London and Paris, threatened by such an eventuality as this, could no longer thwart the necessary developments of the Rome-Berlin axis. But rapid success was the essential condition. Hence, if effective military help was to be supplied to the rebels, there should be no hesitation about it. The risk seemed extremely small. The Covenant of the League did not apply to civil war. Moreover, the Abyssinian campaign had amply demonstrated the weakness and cowardice of the democracies.

It is solely the gallant resistance of the Spanish Republicans that, so far, has foiled this scheme. The pretext of what is alleged to be a civilian religious war is very convenient. To-morrow perhaps it will serve its turn in Czechoslovakia, where the

Reich is trying to enrol more than three million Sudetic Germans beneath the banners of fascism, and it will be used to justify German intervention there. In Austria intervention is already being systematically developed.

The great Spanish tragedy began on July 17, 1936. In 1937 Japan, encouraged by this precedent, raised the curtain on the ghastly tragedy of Chi. How many more of these tragedies are to be enacted before the democracies allow their instinct of self-preservation to overcome their fears?

## CHAPTER VI

### "ALLIANCES ARE MADE ONLY WITH VIEW TO FIGHTING"

In France the Blum Ministry came into power on June 1st, 1936. It showed itself particularly anxious to foster the alliance with Great Britain and to extend, by means of the closest consultations between the General Staffs, the Franco-British undertakings projected in the White Paper. French foreign policy wished to avoid alarming the Government at London by entering into any new commitments in Central Europe, the Balkans or Russia which the British Government might interpret as being prompted by considerations of internal policy.

On July 17th military revolts broke out in Spanish Morocco and spread to the garrisons there, Senta, Larache, etc. The murder of the Royalist deputy Sotillo Cabo at Madrid was the signal which started the revolt. Detachments of rebels headed by the Foreign Legion, reached Cadix and Algeciras

by air or on board men-of-war. They acted as reinforcements for the troops who had also at once moved in the south of Spain. Cadiz and thenville speedily fell into the hands of the rebels. In the north the troops of Navarre and Aragon joined a movement which spread westward towards San Sebastian and eastward towards Barcelona. A militia was set up at Burgos under General Cabanellas, assisted by General Mola. The rebel troops under their command were soon within 30 miles of Madrid.

Up to this point it looked as though the originators of the Italo-German scheme had been correct in their assumption, that the Spanish Republic would capitulate within four weeks. But they reckoned without the heroism of the loyal troops and the free-minded Spanish people. Though badly armed and provisioned, the Republicans held their ground, and the battle fronts established themselves.

Italy and Germany were too deeply involved to withdraw, and at once consignments of arms and war material were prepared in the two countries. According to the most reliable information obtained from the rebels, the supplies of war material furnished by Germany and Italy up to October 1st, 1937, amounted to more than 2,000 field guns, 1,500 aeroplanes, 50,000 machine guns and 1,200,000 rifles. Persons in close touch with General Frangul, the former German ambassador, have estimated the value of these consignments at 1½ milliard marks, two-thirds of which were due to Germany and the remainder to Italy. The payment to Italy was effected partly in money and partly in supplies of raw materials, in some cases even by concessions such as the road transport monopoly granted to a

company at Bologna. The Germans have been paid only in part. The sum which the insurgents owe to the Reich amounted to about 400,000,000 marks on October 1st, 1937. The surplus was accounted for by supplies of raw materials, or settled by frozen marks emanating from a Dutch group and an American banker, acting, in all probability, on behalf of the well-known financier Juan March.

By the beginning of August 1936 Paris and London realized that Germany and Italy had made up their minds to embark upon the Spanish adventure to the bitter end on the pretext that it was a struggle against Communism. This was obviously a mere device for concealing their real intentions, because the Spaniards had only 12 Communist deputies in the Cortes and no diplomatic relations with Moscow. This civil war threatened to develop into a general war. Both at London and at Paris it was felt that an appeal to the League of Nations would not meet the case yet, as the League did not deal with contingencies involving a civil war. In the interests of peace it seemed advisable to win over all countries to a doctrine of non-intervention, which would make it possible for the outbreak to be localized. France took the initiative for diplomatic action in this sense. The ambassadors of Italy and Germany were invited to the Quai d'Orsay at the beginning of August, 1936, and were asked to stop all consignments of war material.

On the 15th of the same month Great Britain and France reached a final agreement to associate themselves with the cause of non-intervention. They decided to close their frontiers to all consignments of arms and munitions. As a result of their determined attitude, Germany and Italy agreed to identify them-

selves in principle with this policy of non-intervention. While this arrangement averted the immediate possibility of a general catastrophe, the drawback to it was that it looked like a victory for the Berlin-Rome axis resulting from the German and Italian policy of blackmail based upon a threat of general war. The League experts were quick to see the disastrous effect which this would have upon international affairs. It meant that from then onwards the slightest threat of war would cause the nations concerned selfishly with their own security, to appeal to the doctrine of non-intervention as a means for evading or delaying the fulfilment of the obligations contained in the Covenant of the League. Henceforward, through fear of being regarded as a war-monger, everyone, though bound by commercial treaties, will refrain from furnishing arms to a country unjustly attacked. Once more force revealed itself as the supreme factor in the world. It is interesting to note that as early as the congress at Vienna Talleyrand referred to non-intervention as "a diplomatic term of unknown meaning".

The effects of this new state of affairs soon made themselves felt. The war in Spain continued and still continues, the war in China broke out with unprecedented violence, and Japan, disguising her aggression as a mere domestic operation on the part of her police force, has informed Great Britain, France and U.S.A. that reprisals will be carried out against the goods and the interests of these countries in the Far East if they render any assistance whatever to the Chinese Republic.

When the Nazis try, by means of an internal putsch, to annex Austria once and for all, that ill-fated country will find itself unable to purchase

the arms to protect its independence. Czechoslovakia would be in a similar plight. Such acts of aggression would be explained away as "measures coming within the scope of internal policy". This attitude may well recoil one day against Great Britain and France who, after all, during the Great War owed their salvation to supplies of American armaments.

We do not intend to recount here the many tedious occasions upon which the non-intervention committee indulged in the practice of eating its words. The sole merit of these performances was to demonstrate the superiority of the Rome-Berlin axis. It certainly was a neat contrivance. Any concession made by Germany would be retrieved by Italy, and then both of them would unite their efforts to drag Russia away from France and Great Britain. This game went on for more than a year and the democracies let themselves be hoodwinked by it. Yet the aims and ambitions of the German and Italian governments were revealed in lampoons, pamphlets and books galore.

In a volume entitled *Das Weltgeschick des Mittelmeeres* Margaret Boberl, on the editorial staff of the *Berliner Tagblatt* wrote: "The dream of Italy is to reach the Atlantic through Central Africa and by way of Lake Tchad. In Egypt and the Sudan Italy will seize Great Britain in her pincers to crush her. Libya and Eritrea on one side and Abyssinia on the other form the two handles of these pincers. . . ."

In a book entitled *Der Mittelmeerraum* written by Herren Hummel and Siewert, and containing a preface by General Hansbofer, it is stated that " . . . the value of Libya consists chiefly in the

possibility of expansion there in various directions. The main caravan routes leading, on one hand from Tripoli through the Sahara towards Timbuctoo, on the other hand towards Lake Tchad, and finally on the south-east towards the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, plainly suggest the lines along which such expansion could move \*.

On the subject of Tunisia the same authors comment as follows :

" Tunisia with Bizerta forms a prize which is becoming more and more attractive to Italy. Tunisia, so close to Sicily as to constitute a sort of appendix to it, has always been regarded by Italy as an Italian sphere of interest. Italy's greatest mistake was to refrain from occupying it."

Again, in number 51 of the *National Socialist Library*, the author of which is a Herr Sell, we read : " Germany's colonial opponent is Great Britain. It is useless to make advances to her. Whenever Germany brings up the colonial question, it is Great Britain who bars the way. Germany's colonial claims on Greece, Portugal and Belgium are of minor importance compared with the huge settlement of accounts to be demanded from Great Britain." Herr Sell adds : " Those of our claims which affect the Dominions of South Africa, New Zealand and Australia will have to be handled in a different manner. They can be used to turn these Dominions against the Mother Country." Under Hitler huge propagandist efforts have been made to bring this about, especially in the South African Union, where the local branch of the National Socialist party is tolerated, if not encouraged, by Mr. Pirow, Minister of War. It may be noted that the leader of the Party in South Africa is Professor Bohle, father of



E. W. Bohle, the head of the Berlin department which controls the doings of all Germans in foreign countries.

Meanwhile the Spanish war was entering a new phase. The fierce resistance of the Republicans compelled Germany and Italy, much against their will, to send reinforcements. They began to feel misgivings as to the economic yield of their efforts. Only by seizing the riches embedded in the soil of Spain could they secure an adequate return for the constantly increasing sums of money which they were advancing to Franco.

The Führer sent General Faeupel to Spain to report on what should be done to settle matters there and to derive the utmost advantage from the war. General Faeupel's report, dated January 13th, 1937, recommended that a fresh contingent of 80,000 men should be sent to Spain. This, he said, was "the minimum number with which the campaign could be brought to a successful issue". These 80,000 men should be supplied under the following conditions :

1. Military operations to be controlled by a German-Italian General Staff.
2. The occupied territories to be consolidated by the Falangists, to the exclusion of the Carlists.
3. Three hundred Italian instructors to be sent to the Phalanx.
4. Qualified German volunteers to re-organize the administration of Spanish Morocco.
5. Systematic development of Spanish Morocco by German-Spanish companies with a preponderance of German capital.



FRANCO

6. German and Italian troops to be kept in Spain until the complete pacification of the country.

The gist of Hitler's comment on this report was that Germany would not withdraw from Spain without having secured colonies.

What followed is a matter of common knowledge. In the early part of 1937 German and Italian contingents, numbering 10,000 and 80,000 men respectively, with the help of nationalist troops, occupied the most important strategic centres in Spain, not only on the Mediterranean, where the capture of Malaga was the first outstanding Italian success, but also on the Atlantic coast.

An article by General Cugnac published in *Le France Militaire* reveals the alarm felt by the French General Staff at these events: " On the pretext of helping the Spanish nationalists, and to thwart Bolshevik intervention, the Italians have established themselves in the Balearic Islands. There are large numbers of Germans in the Canaries and on the coast of Spanish Morocco, at Ceuta and Melilla. France vitally needs unhampered communication with Northern Africa. Great Britain attaches great importance to her route to India by way of Gibraltar. The sea-routes indispensable to them both are directly threatened by the positions which Germany and Italy have occupied during the past year. A provisional arrangement which shows signs of permanency is something out of the common and it inevitably gives rise to alarm. In case of war our communications with Tunisia and Morocco could easily be cut off; at this very moment the naval and aerial bases at Majorca, Ceuta and Melilla are

occupied by our enemies. The bases in the Canaries are a threat to the route between Casablanca and Bordeaux. The French Government is entitled to show concern when it sees that the Italians are remaining at Majorca, when it hears that they have fortified themselves there, when it discovers at the same time that whole Italian divisions here, without any plausible reason, been dispatched to Tripoli, which is adjacent to Tunisia, a French possession. Simultaneously, Germany is intensifying her propaganda against Czechoslovakia. . . ."

The advantages which the Berlin-Rome axis has already derived from the war in Spain, quite apart from the fact that the lines of Franco-British defence in the Mediterranean have been destroyed, temporarily but thoroughly, and that a skilful agitation has been carried on in all the French possessions and in North Africa, are as follows :

In case of a conflict, France will now be compelled to cope with a new frontier viz. the Pyrenees.

For the same contingency Spain provides a source of potential man-power which would make it possible to mobilise a million troops, and also a source of potential industrial output which is now well equipped for the manufacture of war material.

Germany and Italy are provided with facilities to obtain pyrites and mercury at Almaden, iron ore at Bilbao, copper in Morocco.

Portugal has relinquished her traditional agreement with Great Britain, and henceforward is a satellite of Italy and Germany, keeping watch over the Atlantic routes.

The effects of the Rome-Berlin axis were also felt in the Balkans. In spite of the remissness shown by the democracies, the Central European and Balkan countries continued to be adherents of France and the League of Nations. Within the scope of this traditional policy M. Titulescu, the Roumanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, contemplated the possibility of co-ordinating the Balkan pacts and the Little Entente in a series of mutual assistance treaties, buttressed in the West by France, in the East by Russia.

The prime necessity was a re-grouping of the democratic forces in the world to effect the advance of totalitarian influences. The principle of this re-grouping had met with approval at the meeting of the three leading statesmen of the Little Entente countries at Bucharest on June 6th, 1936. When M. Titulescu met M. Blum at Geneva at the beginning of the following month, he told him about the scheme which he had in mind. M. Blum's quick grasp of ideas enabled him to realize what an advantage it would be to France if such a scheme were put into effect. Accordingly, on August 14th, 1936, he sent M. Pierre Cot to Cap Martin to discuss all the details with M. Titulescu.

The scheme, duly put into proper shape ought, by the nature of things, to have become a reality at the Assembly of the League on September 23rd, 1936. But nothing came of it. The Quai d'Orsay, afraid of offending Great Britain, decided to stand aside. Besides, the pacts involved military agreements with countries bordering on Italy, and the Quai d'Orsay was afraid of arousing the Duce's wrath. Hence, when France received urgent overtures on the subject, she replied that at the moment she was not



BLUM

inclined to undertake new commitments. For the same reasons the proposals at which Turkey had hinted to M. Paul-Boncour during the Montreux Conference in July, 1936, were likewise disregarded. Although somewhat vague, they at least showed that Turkey was anxious to draw closer to France and, under her auspices, to explore the possibilities of a mutual assistance pact. This attitude on the part of Turkey harmonized with M. Titulescu's scheme for Central Europe and the Balkans, and would have facilitated the restoration of collective security. The Franco-Czechoslovak-Russian mutual assistance treaties would have dove-tailed into analogous agreements between Turkey and all the Little Entente States.

In his official talks M. Paul-Boncour had drawn the attention of the French Government to the fact that the result of the Montreux Conference would be to restore the control of the Straits to Turkey, and that it was therefore of the utmost importance that Turkey should be associated with the pact which France had concluded with Russia, and also with the one which she was about to negotiate with Roumania. It is obvious that for these two countries the Straits represented the only means of access to the Mediterranean and thus their link with France.

The French reply was not very clear. It was to the effect that France would take careful account of the favourable attitude of Turkey and of the importance accruing to her co-operation from the position which she was henceforth to occupy in the Straits. M. Paul-Boncour was authorized to give assurances in this sense to Mr. Rustu Aras. He did so but Turkey could hardly be expected to let the matter



RUSTU ARAS



rest there. Her reply was roughly as follows: "You ask me to pursue for your benefit a policy of regional assurance, which by refusing passage to warships of your enemies, will drag me into war without the assurance or guarantee of any support whatever."

While, thanks to the efforts and skill of M. Paul-Boncour, the Montreux Conference ended in a satisfactory manner, while, as a result of it, the revision of a treaty was for the first time achieved under the auspices of the League of Nations, it did not produce the results which the goodwill of Turkey would have justified. And shortly afterwards, the Alexandretta affair aroused Turkish annoyance.

Great Britain was to some extent responsible for this partial set-back. I am quite sure that she would have heartily approved if France had seized her advantages to the full, but she did not consider it her duty to encourage the Government of Paris to occupy a leading position at the Straits, which she has always regarded as an essentially ticklish spot from the point of view of the European balance of power.

The Rome-Berlin axis took advantage of this to extend its economic influence throughout the Near East. Dr. Schacht's journeys there at this period made it possible for the Reich to gain economic sympathies which might easily be turned into political sympathies, for friendships between nations have no solid basis unless they promote their economic interests.

Yugoslav and Polish intrigues, hatched in the background by M. Stoyadinovitch, President of the Yugoslav Council, secretly promoted the cause of the Rome-Berlin axis and led to big political changes.

In November, 1934, particularly, the ministerial crisis enabled the King of Roumania to dismiss M. Titulescu. The fall of this statesman, who embodied the policy of the League of Nations and the French alliance in the Balkans, was the most disturbing symptom of the successes scored by the totalitarian countries. Ever since the conference at Blud in August 1935, M. Stoyadinovitch had been anxious to free himself from the Balkan pact and the Little Entente. He was greatly impressed by the display of power on the part of Germany and Italy, and he considered that the security of his country would be better guaranteed by closer relations with Bulgaria or even with Italy. The King of Roumania took similar views.

The Little Entente pact forbade its members to sign any treaty without the approval of its associates, and M. Titulescu, taking his stand on this, would never have given his consent to the treaty of friendship which M. Stoyadinovitch signed with Bulgaria on January 24th, 1937. This treaty had been prepared long in advance at Berlin by the brother of King Boris, the Grand Duke Cyril and ex-King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, who, living as an exile at Coburg, had become the willing tool of German ambitions by way of revenge for the defeat which he had suffered during the Great War. The treaty dealt a serious blow to the Little Entente. By vowing eternal friendship and lasting peace with Bulgaria (Article 1 of the treaty), Yugoslavia was deliberately infringing her commitments, since the Little Entente pact and the Balkan pact made it incumbent upon Yugoslavia, if Bulgaria were ever to attack Germany or Greece, to rally to their side.

The Treaty signed by M. Stoyadinovitch with Italy on March 25th, 1937, dealt a still more serious

"ALLIANCES WITH A VIEW TO FIGHTING" 181  
blow to the Little Entente. By the terms of this treaty Italy, it is true, undertakes not to support Magyar revisionism against Yugoslavia, but on the other hand Yugoslavia is prevented from taking action if Magyar revisionism is exercised at the expense of Czechoslovakia, her co-partner in the Little Entente. Moreover, Yugoslavia is bound to confer with Rome on all future developments of her foreign policy. By this means any diplomatic move of Great Britain and France in Central Europe and the Balkans can be greatly handicapped. They will come up against Italy hidden behind her new associate. Who could have believed this possible at the time of the raid in Fiume or when King Alexander was assassinated?

When M. Stojadinovitch visited Paris towards the end of October, 1937, to renew the Franco-Yugoslav treaty of friendship he was called upon to explain why he had reversed the policy of Yugoslavia. The general purport of his answer was as follows: In January 1935, on his return from Rome, M. Laval when asked by the Yugoslav Minister in Paris whether he had not been able to put in a good word for Yugoslav interests, replied: "I did my best. I came to an understanding with Italy. Now it is for you to do likewise." "Well, we did so. Can you blame us?" said M. Stojadinovitch by way of conclusion.

All the same, France can get her own way when she wants to. Thus, when Paris heard that, under pressure from Berlin, Roumania was thinking of following the example of Yugoslavia by signing a treaty with Italy on similar lines, France put her foot down and stopped it.

Then, too, France discovered that a renewal of the

Polish-Romanian military treaty, under pressure from the same quarters, was being negotiated between Warsaw and Bucharest on terms which would have transformed the treaty into an implement against Russia. France expressed her astonishment and called for explanations. The result was that she obtained formal disclaimers both at Warsaw and Bucharest.

During the visits of the Polish President to Roumania and of King Carol to Poland it was commonly rumoured that, in spite of these disclaimers, negotiations were in progress for the two-fold purpose of preventing the transit of Soviet troops who might be sent to the help of Czechoslovakia, and of preventing the occupation of Bessarabia. If these negotiations led to no result—which, by the way, is uncertain—it was because of the military pride of the Poles.

During their first visit to Roumania, the members of the staff of Marshal Rydz-Smigly demanded that, in the eventuality of Polish-Romanian military co-operation, the high command should be entrusted to a Polish general. This request put a damper on the proceedings. No answer was given, but the officers of both countries half-heartedly examined a map to discover under what conditions any co-operation between them could come about.

When King Carol subsequently went to Poland, he attended the divisional and army corps manoeuvres. Marshal Rydz-Smigly pointed out to his guest that these manoeuvres of the respective units were essential, and that no high command could cope with its task unless these exercises were carried out regularly. He added that to his regret, as he happened to know, these manoeuvres had not

taken place. All the Hohenzollern in King Carol came out, and he did not disguise his annoyance at this remark.

On his way home he sent orders to the Minister of War, General Angelesco and several members of the General Staff to meet him at the frontier. He there curtly asked them why they did not hold any divisional and army corps manoeuvres. General Angelesco replied that it was because parliament had not voted the necessary credits. This explanation did not satisfy the King, and he ordered his Minister to make arrangements for them to be held in the course of the summer. They took place in August, and representatives of the Polish General Staff were invited to attend them. The negotiations relating to the high command were resumed, and a basis for agreement was reached. Here it may be added that the subject of the manoeuvres on Roumanian territory was : joint Roumanian-Polish action against an army from the East trying to force its way through Roumania. These facts seem to show that the disclaimers of Warsaw and Bucharest do not amount to much.

Although Poland continues to emphasize her fidelity to the commitments of her treaty of alliance with France, she has greatly reduced their moral value. Since 1934, owing to her fear of Germany and her dread of Russia, she steadfastly refuses to associate herself with the Franco-British policy of collective security and mutual assistance.

It seems obvious that if Poland, in accordance with the spirit if not the letter of her agreements with France, had decided to join the Eastern Locarno, suggested by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs for ensuring peace in Eastern Europe, Germany

would not have been able to make encroachments in Central Europe and the Balkans, and would have shown herself more amenable to the peace proposals of the British and French cabinets.

Colonel Beck, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, however, did his utmost to frustrate the efforts of France to organize collective security in Eastern Europe in co-operation with Russia and the Central European and Balkan countries. He acted in this way because he resented the Franco-Russian pact which, in his opinion, was a slur on Poland's status as a great power and France's sole guarantee of security in Eastern Europe.

And so, Colonel Beck strove to maintain an even balance between Germany and Russia, without dropping France (for, after all, he still had qualms about Germany) and his whole diplomatic activity was shaped accordingly. In order to perform this difficult feat, which could be of benefit only to the Rome-Berlin axis, he became the champion of the smaller nations. In particular, he had a great deal to do with the changes which occurred in Belgium's foreign policy. His anti-Russian efforts also led him to try and establish Poland as a great power playing a part as protector and mediator to the Central European and Balkan countries. In this new domain he likewise served the interests of Germany, perhaps without intending to do so, for his aim was to keep these countries aloof from the League policy of collective security, and to induce them to seek equilibrium between the Rome-Berlin and London-Paris axes.

Such equilibrium could never be anything but unstable. The nations thus situated would inevitably draw nearer to Berlin and Rome, that being the side



BECK

from which they would constantly be subjected to blackmail with the threat of war behind it. They could hardly be expected to withstand a pressure which the great democracies had proved unable to resist. First Warsaw, then Belgrade, then Bucharest set foot on the slippery downward path, where they will become the tools and later the victims of Italian and German ambitions.

Czechoslovakia alone, staunchly devoted to democracy, self-reliant and faithful to her alliances, has declined to make the slightest deviation from her policy. She has yielded neither to pressure from Poland which takes the form of provocative frontier incidents, nor to Germany who, under cover, is fomenting agitation among her German minorities. This agitation is entirely baseless, as the minorities in Czechoslovakia enjoy rights which are withheld from all other minorities elsewhere, especially from those in Germany and Poland.

At Berlin on September 27th, 1937, it was decided that Italy would join the German-Japanese anti-Communist Pact.

The two dictators met at Munich, then at Berlin, discussed the international situation, and came to the conclusion that anti-Communist doctrine was everywhere arousing more interest than any aspect of foreign policy. They therefore decided that the time was ripe to take the utmost advantage of this tendency.

It was Mussolini who realized more than anybody else the new possibilities of the Rome-Berlin axis. M. Jacques Bardoux pointed this out in the article which he contributed to *Le Temps* on October 16th, 1937: "While at the Berlin meeting the Führer in his



speech referred very briefly to his anti-Communist policy, the Duce on the contrary expressed it with a deliberate blatancy." In the presence of a million Germans he declared: "When words no longer suffice and the circumstances are threatening enough to make it necessary, we must have recourse to arms. That is what we did in Spain, where millions of Fascist volunteers fell to save European culture." Mussolini had learnt by heart the German speech which he delivered on this occasion. His pronunciation was such as to be almost unintelligible to the Germans. To make matters worse the crowd, in spite of the instructions which they had received, showed signs of amusement at the antics of Mussolini who during the speeches of Hitler and Goebbels arose and bowed each time his name was mentioned, that is to say, two or three times every minute.

The new phase of the activity of the Rome-Berlin axis was the most dangerous of all. The Rome agreement of November 6th, 1937, between Germany, Italy and Japan, concluded ostensibly for the purpose of waging a struggle against Communism, would necessarily attract those sections of public opinion everywhere which are hostile to Communism. Thus, the doctrine of Geneva, essentially democratic and equalitarian, will find itself yielding little by little to an anti-Communist doctrine. This doctrine, which derived its inspiration from Fascist materialism or Nazi racial "science" is an abomination. As far as the Duce and the Führer are concerned it has only one definite object in view, and that is to deprive the big Western democracies of their most faithful adherents. Just like the Spanish war, its main purpose is to enable Germany and Italy,

without starting a joint war, to extend their influence in Central Europe, while Japan, in her turn, uses it as a pretext to "colonize" China, to expel the Western powers from there, to threaten Indo-China and the British possessions of the Far East. There can be no doubt that the war which Japan has recently embarked upon was facilitated by the two other partners of the anti-Communist triangle. General Ott, the German Military Attaché at Tokyo, received orders from Hitler to remain with the Japanese headquarters staff at Shanghai, and to send him detailed reports on the military operations. Apart from this, Germany has supplied arms, munitions and implements of war to Japan.

Italy, in her turn, is ready to take action in the extreme east jointly with Japan. It is already possible to see the outlines of a vast scheme of war directed against Great Britain, the United States and France, as foreshadowed in a speech by Mussolini as far back as March 1934: "The historical aims of Italy are indicated by two words: Africa and Asia. The south and the east, these are the cardinal points of interest to the Italians, and the sources from which they can derive a stimulus for their will power."

The day when Hong Kong and Singapore are threatened, when Great Britain sends her fleet to defend her interests in the Far East, when she is compelled to withdraw the bulk of her defences from the Mediterranean, may well provide the opportunity which Hitler and Mussolini have agreed upon jointly with Japan for starting an appalling war in Europe.

The diplomats who are stationed at Berlin and Rome are of the opinion that German and Italian

" ALLIANCES WITH A VIEW TO FIGHTING " 189  
statesmen have never even contemplated such an act of aggression. But these same diplomats refused to believe in the possibility of an infringement of the treaties which Germany and Italy nevertheless had in mind for many years before they were actually carried out.

In our opinion, the matter rests with Great Britain and France. If they, both firmly united and assured of the sympathy, if not of the co-operation of the United States, set their faces against the threats and encroachments of the totalitarian states, the danger of war will be obviated, for it must not be forgotten that behind the pompous façade of the Nazi and Fascist régimes lurks the spectre of poverty and ruin.

## CHAPTER VI

### BEHIND THE FAÇADE

At the present time Italy could not keep a war going for more than six months. On paper, at least, it is possible to demonstrate this beyond cavil. Italy lacks raw materials. She has no alliances which would enable her to obtain them without payment in foreign currencies. Abyssinia will be run at a loss for many years to come.

The war of 1914 did not prove that money had ceased to be the crucial factor in hostilities. When it started, the financial and economic situation of the belligerents was different from what it is to-day. A long period of peace and prosperity had made it possible to accumulate large supplies of reserves. Credit then really meant something, for it was backed by international freedom of trade.

There are people, of course, who assert that even if Mussolini has robbed Italy of freedom, he has at least developed the national output and bestowed great prosperity upon the country. This is quite wrong. In reality Fascism has caused a great increase of distress in Italy. Since October 1935 all economic and financial statistics have gradually been discontinued, as it is officially asserted that "such statistics might prove of service to the enemy". The scanty particulars supplied by the government or the press have to be accepted with caution. Mussolini's capacity for bluff seems to be boundless. He himself once admitted when recalling the painful memory of Caporetto that if he had then been minister of war, he would have proclaimed that defeat as a great victory. It will therefore gratify his sense of proportion if we state that, in an economic respect, Italy is now experiencing nothing less than a Caporetto. A few plain facts will show how far this statement is justified.

In the speech outlining his programme which he delivered on May 26th, 1934, in the Chamber of Deputies, Mussolini acknowledged that there was an annual budget deficit of more than 3½ milliard lire. What is the deficit now that the Abyssinian campaign is over? Let us consider the matter dispassionately.

In 1922 the Italian state debt amounted to 103 milliards, the war debts having all been paid. In February 1935 it amounted to 154 milliards, without taking into account the expenses involved by schemes of public works, which were more spectacular than remunerative and which, for the greater part, were paid for by long-term bonds. These were discounted by banks of various types.

Since February 1935 the situation has become distinctly worse. To the debt of 1935 must be added the annual budget deficit estimated by Mussolini himself at 3 milliards, and the expenses of the Abyssinian war, which amount to about 30 milliards. At the present time the debts and long-term obligations of the State are something in the neighbourhood of 200 milliards. Thus, Fascism has doubled the debts of Italy.

According to the monthly statistical bulletins of the League of Nations for September 1937, the value of gold reserves and the securities reckoned on a gold basis in Italy at the end of 1928 was 11,061 millions, and in March 1937 it was 4,022 millions. In the latter amount, too, we must remember, allowance must be made for the devaluation of the lira by about one third. How much is now left of this gold reserve?

Before Fascism, there were certain important business banks in Italy whose international activities promoted the State credit. Their influence on international markets was of great benefit to Italy. To-day these banks are mere empty husks, and they have no other credit than that of the State itself. Moreover, the shares of Italian banks are no longer quoted on any market, not even in Italy. For if such quotations were available, they would reveal the international discrepancy which has resulted from the Fascist régime and its economic and financial methods.

On top of all this, the taxation in Italy is stiffer than that in any other European country. Landed proprietors pay up to 75 per cent, sometimes even as much as 80 per cent of their revenues. Many industrialists and owners of estates who supported

Fascists from the very outset, now find that the régime which they favoured is worse than a communist revolution. Not only have they paid rates and taxes to the State and the local governing bodies, but also contributions, often sardonically described as voluntary, to the Fascist party institutions.

The noteworthy book by Rosenstock-Frank entitled "Fascist Economics in Theory and Practice" contains striking evidence of the extent to which the corporatism system has been utilized for subjecting the whole country to a methodical process of extortion by the government. This extortion, however, while it is practised for the benefit of the Fascist State, does not produce any wealth. How then can Italy meet the expenses entailed by war, propaganda abroad and useless work of a spectacular character?

Emil Ludwig, in his book on Mussolini, reproduces a conversation which he had with the Duce. In a sudden burst of frankness, which he rarely reveals, Mussolini told Ludwig that Fascism was bound to end with him. In the Italian edition this statement was coyly omitted.

Meanwhile the Duce is borrowing money. He has incurred extensive debts abroad; in Italy he has adopted every possible method of expropriating private wealth, such as taxation, forced loans, etc. He has compelled the Italians to surrender all their gold, including even their wedding rings. He has requisitioned all the assets which Italian citizens, banks and commercial undertakings owned in foreign countries.

A recent decree has made it compulsory for owners of real estate to subscribe to a new loan,

the amount in each case to be 5 per cent of the value of their property. Failure to comply with this law involves confiscation as a penalty. Most of these owners are already in very strained circumstances, and they could not comply with the Duce's demands except by borrowing at 7 or 8 per cent from the banks, all of which are State concerns. The amounts were invested in the loan which yielded interest at the rate of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

All industrial and business undertakings are subject, not only to various kinds of control, but to extremely severe restrictions. Thus, a decree of September 1937 provides for a levy of 10 per cent upon their capital and reserve funds. This is officially described as an "exceptional contribution". It might more appropriately be called a "contribution towards the general bankruptcy of Italian economics".

Before the depression of 1931 and the following years, the total capital of joint stock companies amounted to 52,281 million lire. At the present time this capital no longer exists except as a nominal sum. The banks and financial companies, whose capital amounted to 7,099 million lire, have come under state control or are insolvent.

The transport concerns, representing a capital of 3,995 millions, manage to exist only with the help of state grants which they receive for the sake of the tourist traffic. This brings them in a certain amount of foreign currency, but even so, they fail to produce any profit.

The building industry is entirely at a standstill, in spite of the increase in the population. The bulletin of the League of Nations for

September 1937 records that the number of building licences decreased from 100 in 1929 to 48 in July 1937.

The motor industry, which until 1922 was the foremost in Europe, produced only 48,000 cars in 1936, as compared with 65,000 in 1927. During the same period the output of cars increased in Germany from 96,000 to 298,000, in France from 191,000 to 203,000 and in England from 212,000 to 481,000.

The average monthly value of imports has fallen from 16,097,000 lire in 1927 to 5,008,000 lire in 1936. As regards the average value of exports it has fallen from 1,302 millions to 455 millions, these figures representing devalued lire. And if the commercial balance is bad, the balance of payments is even worse.

The goods traffic on the railways, according to official figures, has declined from 1,067 millions tons in 1929 to 831 millions in 1936.

During recent years there has been no country in Europe in which so many drafts and bills of exchange have been dishonoured as in Italy. It would seem, also, that during the last ten years there has been a larger percentage of bankruptcies there than anywhere else.

Finally, according to the enquiry of the International Labour Office at Geneva, salaries in Italy are the lowest in all Europe, yet amid the increasing distress of the population at large the leaders of Fascism have managed to accumulate large fortunes. In this connection it is necessary to refer only to such names as Costanzo Ciano, the father of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Giuseppe Volpi, Deveschi and Balbo. The only other people in



Italy who have become wealthy are the large industrialists engaged upon war work, or a few leading contractors who were entrusted with large schemes of public works under State auspices. The best known of these is Signor Pirelli.

Before Fascism Costanzo Ciano occupied a subordinate post in the mercantile marine. He became Minister of Communications, founded the State co-operative known as the "Provida", about which a good deal might be said. He received the title of Count de Corsellanzo, was appointed Admiral, and awarded the gold medal for military distinction. He was subsequently appointed President of the Chamber of Deputies, and became Knight of the Order of the Annunciation, which is equivalent to being "the King's cousin".

The poet D'Annunzio, in return for his services as an adherent of Fascism, was granted a royal status with the title of Prince of Montenevoso. After the death of Marconi he became President of the Royal Academy of Italy.

General de Bono was originally Commissioner of Police. He was rewarded with the Ministry of Colonies. Later on he became Commander-in-Chief of the Army in Abyssinia and was made a Field Marshal.

Like all dictators, Mussolini considers that if he is to last, he must have men around him whom he can trust, and for this purpose they must be paid liberally. As for the rest of the population, the police with the help of terrorism and systematic denunciations can manage to cope with them. The grip of the secret police known as "Ovra" makes itself felt everywhere and worms its way into the humblest homes. Many people have been betrayed

by their own parents. It has become dangerous to speak in the hearing of children, who are taught at school in the "Bulilla" or "Avanguardista" troops that the supreme principle of conduct is contained in this statement: "Mussolini is always right and the enemies of Mussolini are enemies of Italy." Teachers who wish to remain in favour make a point of gaining the confidence of the children. Suetonius tells us that under Nero it became a crime against the state, not to speak, but to refrain from speaking. If Mussolini had any scruples, this precedent from the "Roman Empire" would assuredly have set them at rest.

The study of the problem of armaments leads to conclusions which show that it would be impossible for Italy to sustain a war of long duration. In spite of appearances the army and navy are often handicapped by a shortage of the resources which are prime necessities in time of war. Italy has extremely small supplies of iron ore, and scarcely any coal or petroleum. She is obliged to import at the very least 9-11 million tons of coal and all the petroleum which she requires. Lack of foreign currencies and credits has prevented her from providing herself with stocks of these materials extensive enough to serve the purposes of a long European war.

Germany has difficulties of her own and could not supply Italy with what she needs. The same applies to Japan, a distant country which is fully occupied by efforts at expansion in China.

Abyssinia, again, constitutes a drawback to any Italian military action in Europe, and will continue to do so until it has been pacified and organized,

equipped with a proper administration, exploited on rational lines, and, above all, until the loyalty of its population has ceased to be an uncertain factor.

On May 12th, 1936, the day after the proclamation of the Empire, when the frenzied delight of the Italians had not yet abated, the officials at Rome already knew that they still had many difficulties to overcome, and that the "colonization" of this Empire would entail new sacrifices and take many years.

The colonization scheme which was then decided upon by the Ministry of Colonies, and which has now been shelved for lack of money, was prompted more by military than by economic considerations. The underlying idea was to turn Abyssinia into a source of man-power. In five years it would have to yield a black army of three millions, with 300,000 Italian technicians to look after them. This was all bluff and another aspect of the Italian policy of blackmail. The Year Book of the League of Nations for 1934-35 states on pp. 18 and 24 that no census has ever been held in Abyssinia, and that the estimates of the population there range from 5 to 16 millions, including, of course, women, children and old men.

When on May 9th, 1937, the Duce addressed the native troops who had been brought to Rome to take part in the military pageant of the Empire, he said to them: "It is in you that we place our hopes of conquering the glorious Italian Empire of Africa."

According to the scheme, every child in Abyssinia between the ages of 8 and 14, just as those in Italy between the same age-limits, would undergo military training. At 14 they would join the Empire

"*balilla*" organization, at 18 they would become regular soldiers and the pick of them would remain in the army. The others, after returning home, would have to devote one day per week, five days per month, or a fortnight every three months to their military training.

Two-thirds of the harvests were to be requisitioned by the military authorities. Italian Africa was to become self-sufficient at the earliest possible moment. A metallurgical company would be formed with a capital of 100 million lire, 51 per cent of this amount being supplied by Italian industrialists and 49 per cent by the Germans. Its main object was to have been the acquisition of the iron ore and coal which had been discovered in Hamae.

At the same time a scientific organization would have secured the monopoly of mining research, as preliminary investigations seemed to show that the soil of Abyssinia contained copper, zinc and gold.

It was also contemplated that the water-power and the forests would be fully exploited, and a National Bank of Italian Africa was to be established. The whole of this ambitious programme had to be postponed for lack of resources and also because the situation in the country continued to be uncertain.

Unlike the French method in Morocco, where expeditionary corps of very moderate size conquered the country by gradual stages, passing from one section to the next only when political stability had been achieved, and its economic organization set up in the previous case, the Italian procedure was to try and operate simultaneously throughout the country by using troops on a far more lavish scale than had ever before been adopted in colonial

expeditions. "What other nations took ten years to do will be achieved by Fascist Italy in two years," asserted Signor Lessona when he paid a visit to Abyssinia in 1936.

As soon as the Italians had penetrated into the interior of the country, their food supply and upkeep presented difficult problems. Apart from the railway between Djibouti and Addis Ababa, the communication routes were of the most primitive character. In June 1936 the advance was held up by the rainy season. The Italians were compelled to concentrate round the main centres and highways, and were thus unable to deal promptly with the rebellious elements wherever they showed signs of activity. They could not even put up any effective opposition to the increasing hostility of the natives in certain centres. The attempt to murder Marshal Graziani at Addis Ababa on February 19th, 1937, shows how precariously they were situated.

Each rainy season causes, and will continue to cause, further outbreaks of insurrection, the leaders of which have aircraft and up-to-date arms at their disposal. Gadyan is in a state of insurrection and Begemendoe, the capital of which is Gondar, has also risen in revolt. At the Welo of Bedja, Mangasha-Abey is beginning to rebel and his example is being followed at Ternabor by Dedja Joseph, a relative of the Emperor Selassie. At Gondron, on the road to Lekenpi, General Bellini was attacked by a large body of insurgents and had to withdraw, leaving his supplies behind him.

Several other centres of disaffection have been reported. Makale Selicte and Ankober fell into the hands of the rebels, and the garrisons numbering 3,000-5,000 Italians were massacred. General

Gallina is blockaded at Antober and it is probable that he can be kept supplied with food only by means of aircraft.

The gravity of the situation has been increased by the need for sending large numbers of troops back to Italy, on account of the tension in Europe and also for financial reasons. According to the latest information from the most reliable sources, the only Italian troops recently left in Africa consisted of a division of Savoy grenadiers, stationed at Addis Ababa, and a few brigades distributed over the five government areas, the total being about 70,000 men. Hence, the claim that Italy can make use of a large colonial army in a European war is all bluff, and part of Mussolini's policy of blackmail. Not only would the Italian army be unable to draw upon native troops, but in all probability it would be compelled to set aside large detachments for the protection of its "Empire".

Although the Italians are skillful at propaganda, they have not succeeded in winning over the native inhabitants.

From the point of view of economics, the colonization of Abyssinia has met with difficulties due to the climate and the distribution of land. The low-lying regions, which cover the largest areas, are suitable only for the nomad tribes who tend their flocks there, and impaludism is endemic.

It is not surprising that the country does not appeal to the Italians. Only a few hundred soldiers agreed to remain there after being demobilized. The Fascist Government met with a serious setback when it had to repatriate the bulk of Italian labourers who had been brought over for the task of road-building. Instead of the hand flowing with

milk and honey which a persuasive propaganda had led them to expect, these workmen found only a cold and rainy climate, and bad food. They were also sniped at by rebellious natives. The Government was accordingly compelled to try and replace them by Abyssinian labourers, but this plan has not worked smoothly owing to the hostility to which we have already referred.

The main obstacle, however, which the organization of the conquered Ethiopian Empire encounters is the lack of financial resources. The heavy costs of colonization, added to the expenses of the campaign itself, are not off-set by any revenues. In order to levy taxation, the Italians would have to occupy the whole country and have the bulk of its inhabitants under their control.

The budget of the Ministry of Italian Africa estimated an expenditure of 1,614 million lire for the financial year 1937-8, which represents an increase of 1,206 millions as compared with the preceding financial year. Of this total, 1,125 millions, of which 765 millions must be supplied by the mother country, are earmarked for Abyssinia. This budget item, however, does not even cover the expenses entailed by the development of Abyssinia. These extensive financial requirements should be considered in relation to the small amount of gold reserve which Italy possesses (4 milliards on April 3rd, 1937), and the size of the internal debt which already amounts to more than 200 milliards.

Can Italy continue indefinitely to support such financial burdens as these? Without attempting to answer this question, we may safely assert that the

difficulties met by her in Abyssinia would produce an extremely serious situation, if trapped by her own policy of blackmail, she became involved in a European war.

Can the economic and financial situation of Italian Africa be improved by systematically weeding out foreign undertakings in Abyssinia and by introducing a strict monopoly of foreign trade? This does not seem very probable; the attempts which have been made at such a policy hitherto consist only of infringements of the international obligations undertaken by the Italians.

Before the conquest of Abyssinia the Duce, in order to reassure the London Stock Exchange and Wall Street, promised that foreigners would be allowed to carry on their various professions without hindrance. This promise has not been kept. Thus, to mention only the French concerns which had contributed to the economic development of Abyssinia, the concession of the East African Mining Co. has been declared null and void, and the Harar Electrical Union and the Central Electrical Co. of Dire-Dawa have been expropriated.

Italy cannot, by herself, cope with the effort needed to develop her new Empire. Here are a few significant facts: the trade in coffee and leather has practically ceased. At Addis Ababa the food problem has become acute; the price of a bag of flour weighing 100 kilograms is 350 lire, and bread, which is rarely to be obtained and is of atrocious quality, costs 6½ lire per kilogram.

It will entail an outlay of 2 milliards 800 million lire to produce a satisfactory network of roads. The road from Massawa to Mekalle cost 1,350,000 lire per kilometre.



Marshal Graziani, the Viceroy of Ethiopia, in a speech which he made at Asmara, could not help voicing these anxieties. He said :

" Fascist comrades, you are aware how heavily the Empire has weighed upon the balance of the Italian exchanges during the past year. Ethiopia has cost us more than 100 million lire per month, which means that gold to the value of 1,200 millions has left the mother country in the course of the year. The Duke now informs us that these conditions cannot continue without impairing the life of the nation."

The Government at Rome is trying to find someone who can be made responsible for all the blunders which have been committed: the Italian officials in Abyssinia are shifting the blame on to each other, and since Marshal Graziani was replaced by the Duke of Aosta, things have gone from bad to worse.

Can Italy face the possibility of having to wage a war in Europe, while this Empire, of which she is so proud, which is the sole " conquest " achieved by Fascism, and which has already entailed vast sacrifices, continues, for many years to come, to be a drain upon her vital powers? She would risk losing it in such a venture, and that would mean the collapse of Fascism.

No, Italy will not deliberately plunge into a new war. She threatens us, she threatens Great Britain, but it is nothing but bluff, and the best way to call this bluff is to face her fairly and squarely. It is because she realizes the dimness of the foundation upon which this bluff rests that she has turned towards Germany, who is pursuing the same policy and whose military strength she could fall back on.

But Germany is no more able than she herself to stand a war of long duration, and for the same reasons—shortage of gold, raw materials and accumulated supplies. The democratic front has no need to yield to the threats of the dictatorial powers.

What grounds, it may be asked, are there for assuming that Germany would not prove equal to a long war?

Among those who belonged to the ex-Kaiser's circle before the war, there are some still living who tried to dissuade him from his aggressive policy in 1914. These men, who may fairly be regarded as level-headed, now consider that if Germany were to plunge into a new war, she would completely come to grief. They sum up the situation as follows: Who would be our allies? Austria, Hungary, Italy. The rest of the world would probably turn against us as in 1914. The United States would join the ranks of our opponents before we could achieve any decisive result. At first we should no doubt do well. But after a few weeks Great Britain, with her unrivalled sea-power, would manage to blockade us and we should be at her mercy.

It may be objected that this is the opinion of men belonging to the generation which experienced the tragic ordeal of 1914, and that the younger generation, trained in the Nazi spirit, refuses to be guided by past events. They believe in a New Germany, and have been taught that life is of no value unless the approach to it is chosen with a special regard for its dangers. They derive a stimulus from hazards and sacrifices.

The German army, again, has been tempered by the ordeal of restrictions and humiliations. But war is no longer waged by an army alone, however high its quality. In order to stand the test of war, the army must be backed by a united nation. A book by General von Metzsch entitled *The only Safeguard Against Defeat* (Berlin, F. Hirt) insists that this is the lesson to be learnt from the collapse in 1918. The author, it may be added, is a former inspector general of the Reichswehr training department. He is in touch with the Ministry of War and the General Staff, and his book was published with the authorization of both these powerful bodies. Nevertheless, he is not afraid to cast doubt upon the stability of the present régime in Germany, and the support which it would receive from the bulk of the population if war were to break out. He says: "We are not proof against those popular outbreaks which, in the eventuality of a new war, cannot be allowed for in advance by any analysis, however careful."

General von Metzsch, like General Ludendorff in his book *Totalitarian Warfare*, accepts the legend current in Germany since 1919 that the real reason why Germany was defeated was because the army was "stabbed in the back" by the enemies of the State. What Germany lacked, he explains, was a "moral gas-mask to protect the population at large against the invisible and odourless gas of intellectual disintegration". By strict training, says the General, every German should be made to obey without even having the right to think. "From a military point of view," he adds, "the entire nation ought to be so drilled that, during a war, the word 'Why?' is heard as seldom as possible."

These ideas are opposed by General Marx who writes: "Let us drop the legend that the army was stabbed in the back. The German army of 1918 went to pieces because, when their food-supplies were exhausted, the troops could no longer advance. . . . An offensive is not broken because it misses its aim or because the centre of gravity of the battle has shifted. Pangs of hunger were the real cause of the breakdown. Shortage of food slowly but relentlessly undermined the spirit of the troops from the autumn of 1915 onwards."

The most enthusiastic admirer of Hitler can scarcely assert that, if there were another war, the German food-supply would be better than it was in 1918. In spite of all the regulations and decrees, there has been no increase in the area of land upon which wheat, rye, barley, and oats are under cultivation. On the contrary, according to the official German statistics of September 6th, 1937, the area in question, which in 1914 was 11,583,000 hectares, is now only 10,686,000 hectares.

Germany under Hitler, though not at war, is already encountering serious difficulties. There may be no general lack of food, but there is a periodical and regional shortage of meat, butter, fats, eggs, etc. At the present time discontent is undoubtedly much in evidence as a result of the scarcity of food-stuffs, of the bad quality of those which are available and of the makeshift products, and in some areas it has led to disorderly scenes in the streets. General Goering's Four Years' plan cannot remedy these hardships, nor is it of any use to expel foreign journalists who mention them. Public opinion is none the less convinced that, for the greater part, they are due to systematic preparation for war.

German intervention in Spain has increased the discontent due to unsatisfactory food conditions. The shortage in Germany is contrasted with the waste resulting from the supply of war-material to General Franco.

During the first few years that Hitler was in power, public opinion encouraged him to take a strong line. The Germans were firmly convinced that the democratic governments would always give way, when confronted with the Reich's "will to power". Since this "will to power", like that of Mussolini, has encountered a fierce resistance in Spain, public opinion has become more subdued. The attack on the *Deutschland* and the bombardment of Almeria which followed it, caused a regular panic in Germany. The fear of a European war showed itself on all sides. In the factories the workers openly discussed the best ways to evade military service. To counteract this, the leaders of the "Labour Front" tried to organize meetings in favour of a more effective German intervention in Spain, but almost with one accord the work-people defied them.

Only a few brief references can here be made to the underground struggle against the Hitler régime.

The extent of the Catholic opposition is being revealed more and more clearly in the sermons which are preached from the pulpit, and also in the increasing number of people who take part in religious processions. During the summer of 1937 no less than 100,000 paraded at Annaberg in Silesia, while at Aix la Chapelle 50,000 resisted all the efforts of the police to disperse them.

The Protestant opposition is equally staunch, in spite of the wholesale arrests of clergy by the agents

of the Gestapo. At the present time 86 pastors of the "Confessional Church" are in German prisons, including one of the most popular among them, Pastor Niemöller of Dahlen, who during the war was the commander of a submarine.

The middle classes, from whose post-war plight the Nazi Party derived its main support, are now complaining of the crushing taxation and the "voluntary" contributions which they have to pay to charitable and other funds. They are beginning to clamour for the fulfilment of the promises which were made to them by the leading members of the National-Socialist movement.

The small contractors and artisans who are not working on armaments, cannot obtain the raw materials which they need, and are drifting to ruin more hopelessly than if inflation had been introduced.

The peasants are subject to strict supervision and little by little they, too, are becoming discontented. There are districts in which an anti-Darré movement has been established. Its object is to evade the systematic control and the requisitions carried out under the auspices of Herr Darré, the Minister of Agriculture. The wily peasants devise all kinds of tricks to hoodwink the authorities. Thus, some of them who got to know there was going to be an inspection before very long, slaughtered their pigs at night, when nobody was about, and then reported to the police that they had been stolen.

Besides these psychological factors there are statistics which go to prove how dangerous it will be for the Reich to carry out its policy of blackmail based on the threat of war.

Although, owing to lack of firmness on the part of Great Britain and France, Germany has gained a foothold in Spain and has thus secured a supply of certain raw materials which she badly needs, and which formerly made her dependent upon America, France, Russia and Rumania, her chances of waging a long war are handicapped by her economic limitations. What these amount to was indicated in a recent memorandum of the Rhineland and Westphalian industrialists on the economic outlook in Germany:

"(1) Shortage of raw materials, representing 40 to 60 per cent of the actual requirements. This shortage bids fair to become worse owing to the fact that the stocks are almost exhausted. The possibilities of dumping on foreign markets have reached their limits, and it will therefore be necessary to have recourse to the intensive output of substitute products, as contemplated in the Four Years' Plan.

"(2) Lack of foodstuffs for human and animal consumption. Under these two headings the shortage varies from 25 to 30 per cent. Attempts are being made to cope with the effects of the unfavourable harvest of 1936 by food rationing and by measures for stabilizing prices and conditions of sale.

"(3) Shortage of orders which makes it impossible to absorb the available workers. This is due to a decline in the export trade, indicated by a drop from 12 milliard marks to 4 milliards."

Other sources of information show that the stocks are very limited in all branches of output. In the case of half-finished goods there are enough to satisfy normal demands for three to four months. The corresponding figure for materials would be two to three months.

The consumption of metals, india-rubber, petrol and cellulose has already been so restricted by government decrees that, in case of war, it is difficult to see how any further economies could be effected as far as civilian requirements are concerned.

The annual German output of iron and steel amounts to approximately 19½ million tons. This is inadequate for war purposes for which, according to a recent estimate of the *Deutsche Bergwerkszeitung*, 26.5 million tons would be necessary. This means that there is a deficiency amounting to 7 million tons. How could this be met? Only by drawing on the available stocks, which are already greatly depleted, or by tightening up the restrictions on civilian consumption which are already considerable.

There would be no lack of aluminium during a war. The annual output already amounts to some 120,000 tons, which can be increased to 200,000 tons. By means of new processes it would be possible, in case of war, to make up for the imports of bauxite which are now essential for the manufacture of aluminium.

The present annual German consumption of petrol and other oils amounts to 6 million tons, and is constantly on the increase. In 1936 only about 4.1½ million tons were imported.

The annual German output of synthetic substitutes is still only 1½ to 2 million tons. If war were to break out, the consumption would increase rapidly. German military experts estimate that it would amount to 20 million tons annually. It would cost several milliard marks to build the necessary factories for this purpose, and without them Germany would be quite unable, for many



years, to produce synthetic substances on so large a scale. The present stocks of petrol do not exceed 5 million tons and this explains the German machinations in Roumania. Here it may be added that, as the Roumanians themselves ought to realize, a European conflict would result in the occupation of Roumania by Germany. Princess Cantacuzène sums up the Roumanian dilemma as follows:—

"If a war breaks out, our only choice is between a German and a Russian occupation. Of course, we should prefer a German occupation, but the Russians may possibly forestall the Germans. In any case they would occupy Bessarabia, if the Roumanians do not make any attempt to stop the Germans from entering their territory and seizing the oil-wells."

As regards India-rubber, the imports in 1936 amounted to 31,000 tons, which would more or less meet the demands in peace-time. The output of the synthetic substitute is still in the initial stages of development, but in the course of 1938 it might attain a capacity of 20,000–30,000 tons.

The agricultural resources of Germany are likewise very limited. In 1933 the harvest yielded 24 million tons, and this caused even official circles to take too optimistic a view of the possibilities. So high a figure has never been reached since and in 1937 the official estimate of the agricultural output is 20 million tons. This figure is excessive, and apart from that the quality of the harvest was very poor. Moreover, the declining yield of the harvests is not due only to unfavourable weather.

<sup>1</sup> Articles on petrol problems will be found in *Der Neue Tagelach* (1937 Nos. 8, 17, 30).

There are also other factors which operate and which must be regarded as permanent. Among them may be mentioned the shortage and bad quality of the manures, and also the reduction of the areas under wheat cultivation. This reduction, which is due to the amount of space now occupied by aerodromes, exercise grounds and fortifications, amounts to more than 6 per cent. Hence, both the quality and quantity of bread are constantly on the decline. In 1936 the Reich had to import  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million tons of wheat, and in 1937 more than 2 million tons were imported.

With these disturbing figures before him, Dr. Schacht did not hesitate to express the view that, whereas it might be possible to have bread-cards at the end of a war, it would be unwise to start one when there is already a shortage of bread.

In Germany to-day, however, there is a shortage, not only of bread, but also of butter and fats which are strictly rationed. The yield of vegetables, fruit, etc., has been no less unsatisfactory. Potatoes were the only item which did not cause the German authorities any concern.

Statistics likewise show that, as compared with 1933, the supply of meat, milk and eggs has decreased, and is now below the level of normal requirements. War restrictions here might well produce ominous results.

Any consideration of the effects which might be brought about by a long war should also take into account the demands which self-sufficiency make upon man-power in Germany. Thus, it has been estimated that the synthetic output of the 30 million tons of petrol necessary to the Reich for one year of war would involve the retention of

no less than 753,000 men in the factories. Already in almost every branch of industry, there is a shortage of foremen and skilled workers, and attempts are being made to find the necessary labour abroad by means of advertisements in the Swiss and Austrian newspapers.

While there is no unemployment in the war industries, which are working ten to eleven hours daily, it has been necessary to have recourse to military help for harvesting purposes.

There are not enough engineers, chemists and physicists to meet the demand, and the same applies to school teachers. As compared with 1932, the number of students enrolled at the technical colleges has fallen off by 50 per cent, although the course of training has been reduced by one whole academic year. (*Das Neue Tageblatt*, Nov. 23, 39.)

According to an estimate in the *Mitteldeutsche Post* quoted by the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on July 14th, 1937, the mechanization of the army and its technical requirements would make it necessary for 4-4½ million men to be retained in the factories. Hence, the fighting forces would consist of only 5½ million men, instead of the 10 millions mobilized between 1914 and 1918.

This brief survey of the relevant factors tends to justify the conclusion that Germany would hardly plunge into another European conflict unless she were absolutely certain of being able to achieve, almost at the outset, far-reaching results which would make it impossible for Great Britain and France to retaliate effectively. Such a possibility seems out of the question when we consider that the régime is no longer supported by that staunch

enthusiasm which animated nearly the whole population of Germany during the first two years of the dictatorship. The mounting tally of restrictions and disappointments is causing discontent to increase at an alarming rate.

In consequence of this, a special corps has recently been organized under the direct control of Herr Himmler, chief of the Gestapo. Herr Himmler himself revealed to the higher officers of the Reichswehr that this select body of "super-police" is to work in close conjunction with the Gestapo and the General Staff. It consists of carefully picked men from the S.S. who will be entrusted with the protection of the régime. These detachments will never be used in the districts where they were recruited, and, in addition, they will constantly be transferred from one area to another so as to prevent them from getting on familiar terms with the population. For the same reason they will never perform street-duty. They are deliberately being kept in the background and they constitute the régime's last line of defence.

In case of mobilization, there would be wholesale arrests of suspected persons, both men and women. They would be interned in concentration camps, where they would have to manufacture munitions under a regular system of forced labour. The six best-known concentration camps are those termed "Moorlager", and there are also, to our knowledge, eight others, the minimum total thus being fourteen, with accommodation for 180,000 prisoners. One of these camps, which is situated at Lichtenberg, was completed in July 1937 and has been equipped for the manufacture of shells on a large scale. Like the Lichtenberg camp (formerly known

as Grönitzburg) it is intended more especially for women.

The memorandum of the industrialists in the Rhineland and Westphalia, from which we have already quoted some statistics, does not hesitate to point out the dangers of the present régime, although to be on the safe side, it confines itself to economic and financial matters. Here are a few typical examples :

" The military expenditure is an unknown quantity. It is likewise impossible to estimate the administrative costs. The National Socialist State is continually increasing its official posts. At present there is one civil servant to every eight inhabitants of the Reich.

" Nor is there any certainty as to the amount of the national debt and it cannot be assessed until the State gives up its policy of systematic intervention in the economics of the country."

" The agrarian policy of the last four years of the régime is all wrong. It runs counter to nature."

" The object of the Four Years' Plan in industry is to increase the output of synthetic products. It is a plan devised to meet the exigencies of war."

" The State is not endeavouring at all to achieve a normal output, covering expenses and leaving a margin of profit. It is trying to produce at any cost, so as to make itself independent of purchases abroad. Under the most favourable conditions, exports might be reduced to 40 or even possibly 30 per cent of the present total, but even so, the economic independence of the Reich would still be far to seek."

" The Four Years' Plan, by doing away with imports, reduces exports to a corresponding extent. It can only make the present situation worse."

"Meanwhile, the Reich should come to grips with the monetary problem. Hitherto the Reichsbank has avoided monetary inflation and is maintaining the exchange value of the mark. But the Four Years' Plan will absorb the available credits, to the exclusion of all new productive undertakings. The danger to the Reichsbank and to monetary stability will increase from year to year."

"The mark, not having any cover, is merely legal tender at home, and a blocked currency abroad. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the Four Years' Plan will cause a continued rise of prices, which will not be checked by any measures on the part of the economic dictatorship. The decline of purchasing power at home already amounts to 40-50 per cent. We do not see how the trouble can be remedied."

From the above it may reasonably be inferred that the economic situation of Germany in 1937 is far and away more critical than it was in 1914 on the eve of the Great War. It would allow of a sustained military effort only if agreements could be concluded with foreign countries, or if these countries, notably the United States of America (with whom the memorandum would like to see an agreement reached at once), showed at least a willingness to meet Germany half-way, a possibility which seems open to doubt. For, as this stiffly worded memorandum emphasises in its concluding paragraphs, an agreement with the United States would be possible only if the political and economic tendencies of the National Socialist régime were to undergo a complete reversal.

If, as we suppose, such a change is out of the question, all that the Reich can do is to continue

its present policy of blackmail based on the threat of war, with all the risks which it involves, not only for the Reich, but for the whole world. One of the dangers of this policy is that it has to keep on forcing the pace and making the threat more and more explicit. This causes the strain to increase until the situation gets out of hand and breaking-point is reached, even though such a result may never have been intended. But it is inevitable, for unless the régime can produce results by means of the policy on which it has embarked, it must come to grief in the welter of its own making.

Is Germany willing to run such a risk? Without going so far as to allege that she is, we feel quite certain that she has made every preparation to cope with such a contingency. The only thing which she has not done is to prepare a supply of synthetic muscle which would enable her to achieve her aims with the help of men who are underfed, and many of whom have no confidence in the future of the régime.

## CHAPTER VII

### WAR OR PEACE ?

*(A revised chapter written November 1938)*

During September 1938 the policy of blackmail or war, jointly pursued by Berlin and Rome, reached a pitch of effrontery and led to consequences far in excess of anything which even those with the greatest powers of imagination could have considered possible. Nobody foresaw the extent to which

German bluff, adroitly operated, was to get the better of the democracies.

For the first time unmistakable proof was forthcoming that the Reich, caught in the throes of a mystical frenzy, a queer blend of vindictiveness and fear which had caused it to surrender utterly to the Nazi doctrine of brute force, "could no longer be satisfied with anything offered or obtained through negotiations". As Ernst Ludwig has put it very aptly : "However much the Germans are given, it will not be enough for them ; they will be satisfied only with what they gain by conquest." What gave rise to the Nazi movement was the idea that Germany, the country of a chosen nation, was badly attacked in 1914 and shamefully betrayed in 1918. The aim which she has in view is not merely to get her own back ; over and above this she seeks a substantial retribution. Hence, the triumphant progress of Nazism causes it to make increasing demands upon its Führer. It must have territorial gains and it must score diplomatic successes, but more than anything else it must achieve victory.

After Hitler's speech at Saarbrücken which plainly expressed the new Germany's utter distaste for any peaceful co-operation with the democracies, a prominent ambassador at Berlin said : " Hitler is choked by the blood which he has not yet managed to shed." However far his demands are met, this craving for power will cause the international situation to develop at a speed continually increased by the very concessions which are intended as a means for keeping him within bounds, until it culminates in a conflict which forms Germany's only chance of vindicating the National Socialist ideal as voiced by Ernst Jünger, one of those who is officially



authorized to sing its praises : " To-day, a nation's ability is best gauged by its skill in the use of explosives."

During the latter part of 1937 Rome and Berlin had gone on pursuing the blackmail-or-war policy with such consummate mastery as to convince public opinion in the leading democratic countries that the slightest incident would be sure to bring about a general conflict.

After the Spanish imbroglio, the Austrian exploit made everyone realize the dangers at hand. After the seizure of Vienna, it looked as if Prague would inevitably be an easy prey. The quadrilateral territory of Bohemia formed the advance stronghold which protected the democracies by holding up Germany's " *Drang nach Osten*". To dismantle this stronghold meant, first of all, depriving France of a strategic factor essential to her security. It also meant testing, once and for all, the powers of resistance of which the democracies were capable. Moreover, it provided a possibility of separating Great Britain from France.

Unfortunately, both in Great Britain and in France there were many people who thought that time was working in favour of the democracies, and that the Sudeten problem could be settled by a peaceful arrangement. Yet it had become overwhelmingly obvious that the dictatorships, in their present pass, could do nothing else but treat other countries with scant respect and thus bring matters to a head. By their very nature, the dictatorships are not static, but dynamic. Their only chance of maintaining their stability is ruthlessly to keep on doing what they please and taking what they want. Moreover, in pursuing this policy, they will have to

force the pace more and more, and to widen the scope of the international effects produced by their course of action. This can end only in war or the collapse of the dictatorships, and the dictators therefore have never been in two minds as to their final choice.

The increase of the German army from thirteen corps to twenty, and from thirty-two divisions to sixty, the extension of the period of military service from two years to two years and a half, the vast additions to the Siegfried Line—all these measures were regarded as a foregone conclusion. For a long time past the armaments fever, both in Germany and Italy, had been spreading to an extent which was bound to cause the most serious misgivings in London and Paris.

After a journey of investigation in Germany, Paul Reynaud wrote as follows on November 1st, 1937:

"Once again I have paid a visit to Germany. I found there a people, sixty-four millions strong, striving body and soul towards one aim: to make Germany more powerful than ever before. Night and day, German workers are operating the machinery which turns out implements of destruction. At the present moment it is no longer possible to distinguish between the industries which are being utilized for peace and those working in the interests of war. The whole industrial power of Germany has united its efforts to achieve one single purpose."

The dictators are not only piling up their armaments with the greatest possible speed, but they are taking advantage of every opportunity to undermine the political system upon which Great

Britain and France had based European security. The Nazi Party, flushed with success, has strengthened its key positions in a country where even those with grievances prefer discipline to freedom. Ever since the autumn of 1937 the Nazi influence has affected the very heart of the Reichswehr, it has been enforced upon heavy industry, and at the instance of Ribbentrop it now permeates the diplomacy of the Reich. Since the compulsory resignation of Field-Marshal Blomberg and the appointments made by Hitler to the General Staff on February 4th, 1938, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the men now in charge of the Reichswehr have thoroughly identified themselves with the Führer's foreign policy, and will do nothing to prevent the ancient sword of Germany, that symbolic weapon of Siegfried, from being cast into the balance, wherever the need may arise, to back up the device of blackmail or war by which Greater, or perhaps even Greatest, Germany is to be attained.

Thus, the year 1938 witnessed an increase of dictatorship effrontery, with a corresponding decline in the self-reliance of the democracies.

At the beginning of February Great Britain and France both seemed ready to remind Germany and Italy that the period of concessions was over, that the two democracies were tired of being blackmailed, and that they had decided to take action if the beavado of the Berlin-Rome axis were again flaunted.

There is reason to suppose that Great Britain and France sent a fairly worded note to Berlin, declaring that henceforward they would, under no circumstances, allow arbitrary action in Central Europe.



BLOMBERG

It was anticipated that the Reich would be impressed by so plain a statement, and that the Nazification of Austria, with all the dangers which it involved, would, as a result, be held up.

Things turned out otherwise. Hitler's annexation of Austria was carried through as ruthlessly as could be. His dastardly treatment of Dr. Schuschnigg is typical of the spirit by which the whole business was carried out. Yet all that the democracies did was to take due note of the Führer's ultimatum and his fiendish methods.

From the time when the German troops entered Vienna last March until May 21st, Germany carried on a systematic bullying campaign against Czechoslovakia.

On May 21st Great Britain and France once more adopted a firm attitude. France informed the German Ambassador in Paris that, rather than surrender to his country's blackmailing methods, she would mobilise, while Sir Neville Henderson, the British Ambassador in Berlin, actually asked to be recalled.

In spite of Ribbentrop's bluster, Germany realised that she had nearly brought things to a head. She was not yet ready to tackle a democratic front united against her, and she therefore skilfully disguised her real purpose and soft-pedalled her claims.

Accordingly, her next move was to start agitating inside Czechoslovakia, and at Hitler's prompting, Konrad Henlein, the leader of the Sudeten Germans, made a speech at Karlsbad in which he demanded autonomy for the German areas in Czechoslovakia, and enumerated nine points which constituted his conditions for an agreement with the Prague government. German diplomacy thus put forward the

question of Germany's expansion in Central Europe and the Balkans, and of her hegemony which such a process would involve, in the guise of a problem of German minorities who were alleged to be oppressed.

Although it was common knowledge that no minority enjoyed such a liberal treatment as the Germans in Czechoslovakia, and that the German minorities in Poland and the Southern Tyrol were living under conditions incomparably worse, too many politicians both in Great Britain and France played into Germany's hands.

On the day when Lord Runciman started for Prague with the approval of M. Bonnet, who urged the Czechs to make all possible concessions, Hitler had gained his first point. The mere fact that Lord Runciman had been entrusted with this mission implied that Czechoslovakia would no longer act as a barrier to the eastward advance of pan-Germanism, and that the maintenance of peace would involve calling into question the Peace Treaty rights of the Czechoslovak Republic in respect of its territorial integrity and the supremacy of its government within its frontiers. To admit all this obviously meant starting on a course of diplomatic action which might well lead to wholesale surrender.

In order to hide the aggressive aims which had always lurked at the back of his mind, Hitler pretended to associate himself with the Wilson doctrine of self-determination. On the assumption that this principle is of any value after what has happened to Abyssinia, Spain and Austria, surely the democracies were entitled to claim that it should be adopted for the benefit of other minorities besides the Sudeten Germans—those in Germany and Italy, for example. This is a point which still remains unanswered.

However, the quick succession of events soon revealed the truth. At Nuremberg, all Hitler wanted was the application of the Karlsbad programme. But as soon as this programme was accepted by Peagam, Hitler argued that events had proved too quick for him. What he meant was that the weakness of the democracies had proved too slow for him. On September 13th he took his stand upon the right of self-determination. The German Press recorded its approval by demanding a plebiscite. London and Paris made no comment, and Berlin thereupon talked quite openly of annexation.

Mr. Chamberlain proceeded to Berchtesgaden and there reached an agreement with Hitler which, however, at Godesberg turned out to be inadequate for Hitler's needs.

An effort must here be made to cope with the problem as a whole, not merely in its diplomatic aspect, but in its political bearings, which involve far more serious issues. Would the defence of right and justice, the fulfilment of obligations against force, have entailed a greater risk of war than the surrender to force? In this connection, it is worth while recalling that at the beginning of 1938 a very influential British politician said: "If France goes to war without consulting us, we shall go to war, too. But if she consults us first, I rather fancy that we shall refuse to do anything."

A balance had to be drawn between the profits which France might expect if she remained faithful to her commitments within the scope of her traditional policy, and the losses which would be incurred by her prestige if she yielded to blackmail and deliberately sacrificed her future as a great power. The man in charge of French policy, fully aware of

what was at stake, decided to follow the line of least resistance and not to face the issue, even though Great Britain and Russia had once and for all, beyond any doubt whatever, promised their support to France.

The French politicians, aided and abetted by the greater part of the Press, did all they could to hoodwink the public. The choice which they kept placing before the country was a misleading one. Unknown to themselves, they were being worked upon by Berlin, and so they stated their case in such a manner as to make it appear that a general war would be inevitable if France stood her ground. That is what they believed or what they pretended to believe. The French public was never told about Czechoslovak affairs as it ought to have been. The successive Paris Governments ought to have said quite plainly, "Just as the British frontier is now on the Rhine, that of France is within the quadrilateral of Bohemia. France cannot defend herself without the help of the Czechoslovak Army, which can hold up forty-five German divisions for three months." If the case had been put like that, Germany would, in all probability, have dropped the Sudeten problem.

M. Georges Bonnet, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, has a good deal to answer for, if, as he informed the Press, it was his idea to suggest to Hitler, both through Mussolini and the French Ambassador in Berlin, that a meeting of the Council of Four should be held at Munich, at a time when the French mobilization was proceeding without a hitch, when it was becoming known that Hitler had made three unsuccessful attempts to induce Italy to mobilize, when Soviet Russia, on the other hand,



was ready to take action and the United States had issued two noteworthy declarations emphasizing that American opinion regarded a firm stand by the democracies against German expansion as being in the best interests of peace.

Moreover, the Chancelleries were aware that, on Monday, September 26th, at 9 p.m., Generals Loeb, von Hammer and Bodenschatz, after having attempted, without success, to be received in audience by Hitler, had forwarded a sealed letter to him, in which they had boldly expressed the misgivings felt by a large number of military leaders. They mentioned that the troops had shown signs of discontent and that many cases of insubordination had been reported to them. The General Staff expected widespread disturbances if war were to break out, whatever its result might be.

The Generals also reminded Hitler that nobody could forecast how a military setback would affect Germany's future, and they pointed out that the heads of the army were doubtful whether Germany would win. The mobilization plan had been based upon a short war localized in Central Europe, and a general conflict had not been taken into account. The eastern front could not be held if Russian troops entered Poland. They concluded by saying that Czechoslovakia, even if nobody came to her help, could withstand the German troops for three months, and that such a situation would inevitably lead to a general war.

*Österreich* was the only newspaper which, during that tragic fortnight in September 1938, over and over again reported these statements of the German Generals. But no notice was taken of this information. Importance was attached only to what Hitler

had told Mr. Chamberlain at Berchtesgaden: "If you do not give me what I want, I will risk war by myself against the lot of you. And I will wage it with such a ruthlessness that I am bound to win."

The French Government would not believe that Italy's refusal to mobilize, the well-known shortage of trained officers in the German Army, the defects in its equipment which had been revealed in Spain and during the invasion of Austria, as well as the evasive attitude of certain military leaders, provided plenty of reasons, even if there had been no others, why Germany would not act upon her bluff. If there had been a general mobilization in Great Britain and France by way of response to the entry of German troops into Czechoslovakia, there would have been no general war, and the two dictators would have discovered the limits of their power.

The politicians in London and Paris, as Emil Ludwig said, "were scared by their own courage . . . whereas anyone who can prevent a war by a bold threat ought to do so, even if he is not sure of his strength, or if he doubts whether his friends are willing to help him to carry out his threat."

Nietzsche told us long ago that the world belongs to the strong who are able to live dangerously.

If Germany had been confronted by Great Britain and France acting in strict unity, and certain that the United States would maintain a friendly attitude towards them or even come in on their side, she would never have let her bluff start a general war, especially as it was causing uneasiness in Rome.

The British and French Governments made the same mistake when threatened by Germany as Austria did at the time of the Anschluss. Dr. Schuschnigg expressed his willingness to negotiate

instead of offering resistance, and that was the end of Austria. On the other hand, when on May 21st, 1938, in answer to Germany's first ultimatum to the Prague Government, the Czechs all rallied to their frontiers, and Great Britain and France clearly re-affirmed their commitments, Hitler retreated. The real meaning of this was not understood in London or Paris, and concession followed concession until the depths were plumbed in Munich.

The agreement which was reached there marks the climax of the policy of blackmail pursued by Germany since the Treaty of Versailles.

The German newspapers took good care to emphasize the true significance of the Munich agreement. They did not even trouble to keep up appearances by mentioning the Sudeten German minority. In the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of October 9th, Rudolf Röscher said: "Czechoslovakia no longer occupies the strategic position that Paris and Moscow had allotted to her.... For years and years we Germans wondered how we could get away from the Franco-Czech pincers. It was not difficult to see that our best and safest course was not to try and get away from them, but to smash them. . . . What has happened on the territory hitherto under Czech administration will not fail to affect the whole of South-Eastern Europe. The prestige of Germany has, beyond any doubt, increased greatly, and it gratifies us to add that a large share of credit is due to Italy for this moral and political gain. We know that these two powers will make their united weight felt in South-Eastern Europe."

So more blackmail is being planned.

Hardly had the Munich agreement been concluded, than the German Ministry of Propaganda placarded

boardings all over Berlin with a linguistic map of Europe. On this map all European areas inhabited by Germans are marked with lavish daubs of red. The map is accompanied by the following explanatory wording:

"There are 88 million Germans in Europe. Of these, 75 millions live in Greater Germany, and 13 millions in other countries. German is the most widespread language in Europe. The subjects of 23 countries speak German as their native language. To these Germans the Führer conveys his greetings."

And the red smear covers Alsace-Lorraine, Eupen, Malmédy, Schlierwig, as well as extensive areas of Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, Roumania, Yugoslavia, Italy and Switzerland.

So in 1939 there will be farther unpleasant surprises in store for the democracies, unless they manage to do something about it. To-day, more than ever, the demands of the dictators are prompted by their will to power, and are conceived in terms of "opposition" and "force". No moral or religious consideration is taken into account.

In any case, when the time comes for the dictatorships to stake their all upon an ordeal by battle, we may be quite sure that everything, to the smallest detail, will be ready for no other purpose than to achieve a quick result. Neither in Germany nor Italy would the material and moral resources bear the brunt of prolonged hostilities.

Among the many plans which the German General Staff has drawn up in view of a sudden attack on France, there are three which should be specially noticed:

- (1) The encircling movement, which in 1914 was attempted through Belgium and the north of France, is extended to Holland.
- (2) Aims at breaking through the Maginot Line.
- (3) Involves a southward thrust by way of Switzerland.

It is interesting to note how the General Staff has modified its ideas since Hitler came into power. The principles favoured by General von Seeckt, who was the first to advocate the surprise offensive, and the fundamental aim of whose strategy was "to strike a direct blow at the heart of the enemy", gave rise to the Goering plan, which provides for hostilities on two fronts: defensive warfare in the East against Soviet Russia, Czechoslovakia and Roumania, and in the West, a surprise attack which would aim at breaking through the Maginot Line, and which would be supplemented by wholesale bombardments of Paris with poison gas, incendiary and other bombs from three to eight o'clock in the morning.

But the Goering plan has been shelved, because the German General Staff does not wish to fight on two fronts. The German Ministry of War no longer contemplates an attack on Soviet Russia. An attack on what is left of Czechoslovakia does not meet with approval either, for even now any attempt to invade it would entail the concentration of large numbers of troops.

By extending the Rome-Berlin axis as far as Tokyo, the Fuhrer aims chiefly at assigning to Japan, in the German plan of attack, the task of holding up the bulk of the Russian forces, and dividing the British

fleet between the Mediterranean and the Near East by a raid on Hong Kong.

When Belgian neutrality seemed to be within easy reach, and the Redist movement, encouraged by the Flemish Parties, was making rapid progress, the German General Staff adopted the von Mepp plan for an attack on France. This plan provides for the main effort of the German Army to be directed against the southern part of Liéburg, and for a rapid advance through Holland and Belgium. It is based upon the tactics of 1914, but takes into account the fortifications which Belgium has constructed round Liège and along the Meuse. Accordingly, the region of Germany between Cologne and the Dutch and Belgian frontiers has been equipped with a vast network of motor-roads which would facilitate the very rapid movement of large bodies of troops. The success of the plan depends primarily upon the speed with which it can be carried out. Ever since the famous Schlieffen plan, rapidity of execution has always been Germany's chief aim, and her defeat in 1914 has still more impressed upon the German General Staff the importance of a swift and sudden attack.

There are still people who imagine that Germany will respect Dutch neutrality and also the newly proclaimed neutrality of Belgium. They evidently cannot be acquainted with the numerous publications which have appeared in Germany during the last three years, not a single one of which fails to discuss the violation of Dutch and Belgian neutrality. Take, for example, the *Handbook of Contemporary Military Sciences*, an encyclopedic volume of 750 pages, edited by the German General Staff and containing a preface by Marshal Blomberg. This

work justifies the violation of Dutch and Belgian territory, as it is essential for the purpose of forestalling any French aggression there.

On p. 331 of this *Handbook* we read: "In consequence of the line of fortifications along the eastern frontier of Belgium, Germany will be compelled, in case of war against France, to make a dash across the territory of Holland. France is trying to make Holland realize this danger, but so far the Dutch have adopted an evasive attitude. It is obvious that the conditions resulting from the Treaty of Versailles involve the likelihood of a violation of Dutch territory at Maastricht (Limburg), not, however by Germany, but by France."

On p. 340 again, we read: "The narrowest portion of Limburg, which is not more than five to six miles across, seems particularly exposed to danger, for it practically invites the armies of neighbouring countries to encroach upon it."

The main object of the German and Italian intelligence service abroad is to discover exactly under what conditions and especially within what time-limit the six British mechanized divisions available on the Continent under the terms of the General Staff agreement following the White Paper, could be utilized in case of a surprise attack. During a recent secret meeting of the heads of German organizations abroad, it was stated that the reports obtained in this connection "were such as to modify the plans of the German General Staff".

As regards the plan for breaking through the Magnot Line, Lieutenant-Colonel Gutow, one of the best German experts on super-mechanized tactics, foresees a sudden mass attack on a fairly narrow front, under cover of huge smoke-screens,

clusters of heavy tanks followed by light tanks, clusters of bombing planes followed by supporting planes, shock battalions in open formation, and finally the bulk of the troops, who would force their way through the enemy's broken defenses.

The possibility of breaking through the Maginot Line formed the subject of a detailed enquiry in the *Military Weekly* for October 4th, 1935. As a matter of fact, the Germans have for many years been greatly concerned about the Maginot Line and its powers of resistance. At first they conceived the idea of partly counteracting its effects by the use of radio-electric stations on the German side of the Franco-German frontier, the waves from which would interfere with the mechanism for adjusting the artillery of the Maginot Line. Underground stations for this purpose have already been built at Saarbrücken and Speyer. At the same time extensive boring has been carried out along the frontier to operate the mines directed against the Maginot Line, but none of this work seems to have reached a very advanced stage. If to-day it has been almost entirely discontinued, this, like so much else, is perhaps due to further changes in the development of Germany's foreign policy.

Since Mussolini visited Berlin in September 1937, and the community of interests between the two dictators has been linked more closely together, the plan for the invasion of France by way of Switzerland has been closely studied. This plan, the essential purpose of which is to combine the German and Italian armies against France, comprises, at bottom, only a modern re-hash of the plan which was drawn up in 1900, the original of which is kept in the secret section of the Records Office in Berlin. It



bears the signature of General Salletta, the one-time head of the Italian General Staff, and is addressed to Count von Schlieffen, former head of the Prussian General Staff.

We should like to rescue this document from the obscurity which has unfairly been allowed to overtake it, for it is by no means out of date. Some of the points presented by General Salletta for consideration have quite as close a bearing on the present situation as they had on the circumstances by which they were originally suggested. Thus, here is part of the General's message to the Count:

"Your Excellency is thoroughly well aware of the political motives which prompted us to study the plan of an advance through Switzerland by our third army, in order to occupy a strategic front, enabling us to co-operate closely with the left wing of the German army.

"By reason of the importance of the events which may result from the violation of Swiss neutrality, and by reason, too, of the powerless situation in which, if the neutrality in question is not violated, we should find ourselves, it is necessary to study forthwith the problem of Swiss neutrality. . . .

"Switzerland could not easily renounce her neutrality, which she must regard as a vital necessity, and which in recent years has induced her to create an army capable of defending the country.

"However brave and well organized the Swiss troops may be, they could not offer a resistance simultaneously on the German and Italian frontiers, and the fortifications built by the Swiss, mainly on the Italian frontier, would not be of much use, for we should avoid the St. Gothard route, and, having

once set foot in the valley of the Rhône, we could get round the forts of Saint Maurice by advancing along the Tête-Noire pass.

"A previous agreement with Switzerland concerning the entry of our troops might prevent her from throwing herself into the arms of France in a fit of wounded pride at the invasion of her territory without any declaration of war.

"The Swiss understand quite well that the desire to guard their neutrality at all costs would compel them to turn against the first of the belligerents to violate their territory, without even being able to ascertain whether it would not be more in their real interests to join rather than to oppose him. And, as the eventuality of a violation of Swiss territory is probable, it would be unwise to let chance and not reason determine the future of Switzerland."

In 1937 Germany and Italy once more reached an agreement not to let chance determine the future of Switzerland. It is unfortunate that M. Motia has recently shown himself somewhat in favour of the idea that the Helvetic Confederation, of which he directs the foreign policy, can hardly have a free and peaceful future, except by yielding to the pressure of the dictatorships. In the country of William Tell, the champion of national and popular liberties, the very conception of liberty and democracy thus seems to be in danger, and this is an ominous sign of the times.

At all events, the German General Staff thinks that fifteen mechanized divisions would be enough for the purpose of getting to Geneva in one day, Geneva being the point at which the German and Italian forces would combine.

Ever since July 11th, 1936, when, in spite of the dauntless attitude of Chancellor Schuschnigg, an agreement was reached between Germany and Italy to the detriment of Austria, co-operation between the German and Italian armies has become a practical possibility.

A few days after the Austro-German agreement was signed, the *Deutsche Wehr*, the organ of the German General Staff, began to publish a series of articles on "The Strengthening of Swiss Military Power". The problem of a surprise attack through Switzerland is there discussed in all its bearings. By way of conclusion, it is stated that an operation of this kind would prove successful if the German forces can rely upon "the cover of Italy as an ally". According to the plan of operations, Bern would be quickly taken. Considerable importance is attached to this, as it would enable the Germans to seize the resources of the Swiss treasury, amounting to 2 milliards 500 millions of gold francs. On the assumption that the surprise attack would succeed, this plan seems to show that the German troops would reach Zurich and Bern before the first lines of Swiss defence could be made available. By that time the mechanized German divisions would have already made their way downward in a westerly direction through the Jura gap.

In France apparently no great importance is attached to this plan of a surprise attack by way of Switzerland. If it succeeded, it would quickly expose Lyons and the whole industrial area of Comtat to the menace of a German advance. But the assumption that the plan could be successfully carried out is based on an underestimate of the Swiss defences, and also does not sufficiently take into

account the difficulties of the terrain. A surprise attack through Holland could be achieved more easily.

There are undoubtedly many other plans in the pigeon-holes of the German and Italian General Staffs. The important point, however, is that the diversity of the possible ways of attack which have to be taken into account makes the French military task particularly onerous and difficult.

The positions which Italy and Germany have occupied in the Mediterranean under cover of the Spanish civil war add to the gravity of this situation by endangering the routes to North Africa and threatening the British right of way in the Western Mediterranean.

France needs a minimum of twelve divisions to keep watch on the Alps. And under present circumstances, which are favourable to France, backed as he is by the Führer and the Duce, six French divisions have had to be set aside for the protection of the Pyrenean frontier.

Emil Ludwig, himself a German, expresses his astonishment that, for the last ten years, France has been allowing her enemies to establish themselves on the last of her free frontiers for the purpose of completely encircling her.

On the other hand it is difficult to believe that the dictatorships are economically, socially and financially in a position to follow up and co-ordinate their acts of aggression, as they would have to do if, whenever they started in any such acts, they were to encounter the united will of the democracies. Let us take the worst for granted and assume that, at the critical juncture, Berlin, Rome and Tokyo could rely upon the effective co-operation of Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia and Hun-

gary, and that they would likewise be certain of benevolent neutrality on the part of Switzerland, the Baltic and Scandinavian countries, together with Turkey. Let us also assume that Japan, with the help of recruits levied in the Chinese provinces recently conquered, would be able to advance simultaneously against Soviet Russia, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, and, with the backing of Siam, also against Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies, in accordance with the plan drawn up by Captain Ichimaru and published in the *Militärwissenschaftliche Rundschau* (1937). This plan, by the way, provides for an armed attack on Hong Kong, the destruction of the British China Squadron, the siege and bombardment of Singapore, the despatch of submarines to Aden and Cape Town, the blocking of the Suez Canal by submerged vessels, the fomenting of revolts in India and Egypt, the occupation of Siam, air attacks on the harbours of Port Darwin and Derby in Australia, the conquest of Borneo, and finally the destruction of the British reinforcements near Colombo.

Let us assume that all these extravagant schemes are feasible. But if we compare the total forces at the disposal of the democracies and the dictatorships, respectively, we cannot help feeling that all the chances are in favour of the democracies.

Without entering into the full details of the latest statistics we may assume that to all intents and purposes the following figures are in accordance with the facts:

GREAT BRITAIN, with a population of 47,068,000, has 9,000,000 effectives who could be mobilized. The land army consists of 115,000, with 90,000 in the British possessions.



CHAMBERLAIN

The British navy has a tonnage of 1,296,363, and includes 18 capital ships, 6 aircraft carriers, 39 cruisers, 129 torpedo-boat destroyers and 54 submarines. The following are under construction: 5 capital ships, 5 aircraft carriers, 17 cruisers, 33 torpedo-boat destroyers and 18 submarines.

As regards the air force, there are 2,000 aircraft, 1,500 of which are in Great Britain, and 65,000 men, of whom 5,500 are officers.

The army has been completely reorganized and adapted to the needs of mechanized warfare. There have recently been considerable changes in the high command. The navy is being considerably strengthened, and there will be 5 additional first-class battleships. Extensive works are being carried out at Hong Kong and Singapore.

FRANCE has a population of 41,906,000, and 8,900,000 effectives could be mobilized. The land army consists of 415,000 men, and there are 145,000 outside the mother-country. The French navy has a tonnage of 511,817, including 6 capital ships, 1 aircraft carrier, 68 torpedo-boat destroyers and 75 submarines. The following are under construction: 3 capital ships, 2 aircraft carriers, 2 cruisers, 10 torpedo-boat destroyers and 11 submarines. The air force comprises 1,500 aircraft and 50,000 men, of whom 3,000 are officers. France has replied to the latest Italian decisions by laying the keels of new units and she is also adding to her naval aircraft.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA have a population of 128,430,000, and 20,000,000 effectives could be mobilized. The land army consists of 170,000 men and the National Guard is 190,000 strong.



ROOSEVELT

2016



The tonnage of the navy is 1,163,240, and it includes 13 capital ships, 4 aircraft carriers, 30 cruisers, 216 torpedo-boat destroyers and 85 submarines. The following are under construction: 4 capital ships, 2 aircraft carriers, 10 cruisers, 36 torpedo-boat destroyers and 22 submarines.

The air force consists of 2,883 aircraft and 32,000 men, of whom 2,900 are officers. Vast efforts are being made to strengthen the fleet and the air force. In case of war the United States will at once mobilize 400,000 men, and an additional 500,000 to 600,000 within a month. The air force is of the utmost efficiency. It comprises 900 aeroplanes and 900 naval planes, all of them entirely up to date. The naval programme is to be extended.

SOVIET RUSSIA has a population of 170,000,000, and there are 35,000,000 effectives who could be mobilized. The land army consists of 1,300,000. The navy has a tonnage 250,000, including 4 capital ships, 4 cruisers, 25 torpedo-boat destroyers and 130-150 submarines. There are 4 cruisers under construction.

The air force has 4,300 aircraft with 160,000 men, and it reaches an extremely high standard. The mechanization of the army has made extensive progress. Special efforts are being concentrated on the development of submarines.

To these figures must be added those of the Chinese forces, the exact number of which, especially under present conditions, are difficult to estimate. Still, if we consider that China has a population of more than 300,000,000, it is obvious that her potentialities as a source of man-power are considerable.

Let us now see how the armed forces of the

dictatorships compare with this huge total of effectives:

GERMANY now has a population of about 80,000,000, and fully 13,000,000 effectives can be mobilized. The land army consists of 1,000,000 men. The navy has a tonnage of 147,371 and includes 6 capital ships, 6 cruisers, 35 torpedo-boat destroyers and 36 submarines. The following are under construction: 4 capital ships, 2 aircraft carriers, 7 cruisers, 27 torpedo-boat destroyers and 23 submarines. The air force consists of 2,600 aircraft and 130,000 men, of whom 5,500 are officers.

Building is proceeding rapidly in the naval dock-yards as well as in the aircraft factories, which are turning out 250 machines per month. It would appear that two new infantry divisions are about to be established and four divisions of infantry will be transformed into mechanized divisions. There is plenty of equipment.

ITALY has a population of 42,800,000, and 8,000,000 effectives can be mobilized. The land army consists of 550,000 men. The navy has a tonnage of 429,243 and includes 4 capital ships, 22 cruisers, 114 torpedo-boat destroyers and 81 submarines. The following are under construction: 4 battleships, 42 torpedo-boat destroyers and at least 30 submarines.

The air force consists of 2,100-2,200 aircraft and 50,000 men, of whom 5,000 are officers. The army is making great progress, and mechanization is being carried out rapidly. The Black Shirts play an important part in the defence of the country. Italy is building two new capital ships. The aircraft is well organized and reaches a high standard.

JAPAN has a population of 71,000,000, and

13,000,000 effectives could be mobilized. The land army consists of 232,000 men, although recent events suggest that the real figure is nearer 400,000. The navy has a tonnage of 803,162 and comprises 9 capital ships, 4 aircraft carriers, 35 cruisers, 112 torpedo-boat destroyers and 57 submarines. The following are under construction: 2 capital ships, 3 aircraft carriers, 2 cruisers, 15 torpedo-boat destroyers and 5 submarines.

The air force consisted of 1,670 aircraft before the present hostilities began, with 21,000 men and 6,000 officers.

At the present moment Japan, by reason of the hostilities in China, is incurring a considerable expenditure of man-power and money.

There has been a considerable increase in the navy, and two very large capital ships of 40,000-45,000 tons are on the stocks. The figures relating to the air force have been estimated approximately.

YUGOSLAVIA has a population of 15,174,000, and 3,000,000 effectives could be mobilized. The land army consists of 110,900 men. The navy has a tonnage of 9,900.

The air force consists of 300 aircraft and 10,000 men of whom 800 are officers.

The fighting qualities of the Yugoslav Army reach a high standard.

ROUMANIA has a population of 19,423,000, and 3,800,000 effectives could be mobilized. The land army consists of 141,000 men. The navy has a tonnage of 10,000. The air force consists of 280 aircraft and 10,000 men, of whom 1,100 are officers.

For the smaller countries national defence represents a heavy budget item. Roumania is improving her army to the full extent of her ability.

POLAND has a population of 34,221,000, and 6,500,000 effectives could be mobilized. The land army consists of 266,000 men. The navy has a tonnage of 8,500 consisting of light cruisers and submarines.

The air force consists of 500 aircraft and 10,000 men, of whom 1,200 are officers. The Polish Army is modelled on that of France. The equipment is continually being improved. The navy is not considerable, but there are plans for increasing it. The air force is very efficient, but the figure of 500 aircraft seems an over-statement.

Thus, the democratic States possess regular military forces amounting to more than 2,500,000 men, and the total number of men which could be mobilized is nearly 75,500,000, excluding the forces of Republican Spain, which have been estimated at more than 500,000, and of China.

In the dictatorial countries, on the other hand, the regular armies amount to 2,344,500 men, and a total of 48,350,000 could be mobilized, excluding Hungary and Greece.

The democratic countries have a total naval tonnage of over 3,000,000 as compared with only 1,406,776 in the dictatorial countries.

As regards aviation, the latest approximate statistics (January 1st, 1938), show that the democratic countries have 11,385 aircraft, while the dictatorial countries have only 7,800.

It will accordingly be seen that, even at a conservative estimate, the democratic countries are far superior to the dictatorial countries—75,000,000 men to 48,000,000 and 4,000,000 naval tonnage to 1,000,000. These figures are reassuring.

Moreover, not only do the democracies surpass

the dictatorships in numerical strength, but to their superiority in this respect should be added economic factors, such as raw materials, food supplies, etc., and also psychological factors represented by powers of endurance and singleness of purpose. These economic and psychological factors all operate in favour of the democracies, and any war lasting more than a few months would be disastrous to the dictatorships.

It is evident that American help would not be available immediately. Hence, it is of the utmost importance that the democracies, in order to hold their own against the dictatorships during the first few months of a general war, should be able to rely to the fullest extent upon the Russian forces.

The Franco-Russian pact, which has hitherto been criticized in certain quarters, thus reveals itself as one of the determining factors in the issue of war or peace, defeat or victory. If the dictatorships are quite certain that Russia and France are linked by military agreements, based upon definite plans, and that at the first sign of a disturbance of European equilibrium by Germany and Italy, the Soviet troops will oppose any attempt on the part of Germany to seize the Roumanian oil-wells and to occupy Roumania itself, a country which abounds in cereals, then it is not probable that the Reich would plunge into such an adventure.

In this connection it should be noted that, despite certain rumours, and even certain reports, the Red Army, notwithstanding the summary execution of certain of its chiefs, who showed too great a readiness to listen to suggestions from Berlin and Tokyo, has retained its value unimpaired. This is borne out by a number of diplomats who are entirely un-

biased on this point, and who have been living for many years in Russia.

General Jegor, though perhaps less distinguished than Marshal Tuchatchensky whom he replaced, is, by common consent, better fitted for his task. It should not be forgotten that the Russian Army in the Far East is self-contained, and has never been regarded as having to take a hand in any European conflict. With the resources of a rich industrial region to maintain it, and with an equipment to which close attention has been paid, it could, without any reinforcements, hold its own against the Japanese. Moreover, the aircraft base at Vladivostok is only a few hours' flight from Tokyo.

The democracies need not therefore feel alarmed at the present situation, if they are firmly resolved to remain united, and to hold their ground at every point and by every possible means.

Unfortunately, the recent events in Czechoslovakia have produced fresh proof of the weakness of the democracies when blackmailed to an ever increasing extent by the dictatorships.

At Munich Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier did nothing but accept Hitler's terms, for which Mussolini adroitly acted as a go-between. All that the champions of the democracies could secure was that Hitler's brutal demands were very slightly toned down, and scarcely had the agreement been concluded than the worthy Mussolini was asking London and Paris to remunerate him for "his good offices".

In France those who had any finer feelings refrained from appearing in public during the short period when the nation, in its sudden relief from the tension it had just passed through, a nation,

moreover, which had not been told the true facts of the case, cheered MM. Daladier and Bonnet for having thought fit to deliver over to the tender mercies of Germany the country which they had sworn to defend in accordance with the solemn commitments undertaken by France.

It was actually Berlin which went out of its way to reveal the facts to anyone in London and Paris who might be anxious to discover them. The German Press sang the praises of its "Führer", not so much because he had freed three million Sudeten Germans from Czech "oppression", as for having, to all intents and purposes, removed from the map of Central Europe a country which had been the ally of Paris and Moscow, and which formed the last of the barriers which the Treaty of Versailles had set up against a renewal of German aggression.

The *Nationalzeitung* of Essen which is, of course, Marshal Goering's paper, quite openly admitted at the beginning of the Czech crisis that "the nightmare of coalitions again haunts the minds of the German people".

The Munich agreement caused the Reich to lose the restraint which it had hitherto shown in its eastward expansion, and which was due to the fear of a Czechoslovakia, endowed with great strategic advantages and enjoying the diplomatic support of France and Russia. Now, however, it no longer forms an obstacle to the fulfilment of the old imperial dream which the author of *Mein Kampf* adopted as his own, and which H. Loiseau in his book on pan-Germanism disclosed as far back as 1921. Its aims, he pointed out, were "... to annex a part of Poland and the Baltic States, to establish a vassal State in the Ukraine, to thrust Russia in her isolation back

towards Asia; secondly, to establish zones of direct and indirect influence in the south and south-east of Europe." M. Lohseu also said: "German domination was not to be limited to Austria, but was to extend to the Balkans and Turkey." The Reich, gloating in its power, to which its very enemies, after consolidating it, have publicly given their blessing, is now following up its diplomatic offensive by an economic campaign. The outward sign of this is the visit paid by Dr. Funk, German Minister of Economics, to Sofia, Ankara and Belgrade. The agreements which he has signed have produced, for the benefit of Germany, a vast flow of trade proceeding, in advance of the German armies, along the Danube towards the Near East. The development and unification of Balkan economic affairs under the auspices of Berlin mark the first stage of the new "*Dreing ack Oasen*".

In his speech at Saarbrücken only a few days after the Munich agreement Hitler made it quite plain to Mr. Chamberlain that in order to fulfil her mission in Europe, where she intends to cause peace—a German peace—to prevail, Germany means to see to it that those countries which recently waived their interests and rights in her favour, shall never again have any say in the internal affairs of the Danubian and Balkan countries, over which the Reich proposes to consolidate its "protection". How far this tendency has already operated may be judged by the fact that Great Britain and France were conspicuous by their absence from the discussions between Budapest, Warsaw, Bucarest and Prague.

Meanwhile, the Quai d'Orsay has lost its bearings. An attempt is being made there to discover a basis for the new foreign policy of France which M.



Daladier, in his speech to the Chamber of Deputies on October 4th, declared to be urgently needed.

Russia continues to be an unknown quantity. The Franco-Russian alliance will perhaps be maintained, and it may continue to be effective, even after Munich. If France, this time with the backing of Great Britain, pursues a bold Franco-Russian policy, she may yet play a leading part in Central Europe and the Balkans. In such a case she would be able to save Roumania from yielding to German blackmail, and as a result, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece would, to some extent, moderate their pro-German tendencies, for which these now favouring them can claim that they are profitable. Unfortunately, this cannot be denied.

Unless France re-adjusts her foreign policy on the basis of the Franco-Russian pact, she is doomed to pass from concession to concession, and to encounter setback after setback, until the day when Hitler, disregarding his own promises, demands Alsace-Lorraine, and Mussolini lays claim to Tunis. There cannot be the slightest doubt that, if and when that day comes, all France will dauntlessly rise in unison, but it will be too late. Without any allies, she will be able to do nothing except sacrifice the best of her sons in defence of her national heritage.

Are we to be optimistic or pessimistic?

An optimistic outlook is justified if the people of Great Britain, with their sturdy qualities of common sense and practical shrewdness, and the people of France with their outstanding intelligence, realize that on September 30th, 1938, the democracies incurred an appalling humiliation, and that if they are to make up for it, they must at once start consolidating their national defences and they must also

remains closely associated with Russia in international politics.

If, on the other hand, public opinion in the two countries is so short-sighted as to demand an easy-going policy within the scope of a Pact of Four—which, as Hitler and Mussolini quite brazenly declare, would involve only "one-way" concessions in favour of the dictators—then the words of Mr. Winston Churchill after the Franco-British plan for Czechoslovakia had been drawn up will prove only too true: "Great Britain and France had to choose between war and dishonour. They chose dishonour, and war will follow."

Peace was not saved in Munich. The only result produced there was that in return for concessions—and what concessions!—war was postponed.

The democracies must take advantage of this respite if to-morrow they are not to be overwhelmed by the grim dilemma of having to choose between complete surrender or war. In a final effort they must appeal for self-denial and sacrifice on the part of their whole population, men, women and children alike.

The present issue involves the defence of an ideal of civilization, the essential feature of which is respect for human freedom and dignity. As Emil Ludwig points out: "Ideals have always been formulated and upheld by isolated thinkers, but it is always by armed men that they must be defended to the last."

AND STILL THEY COME

## January 1939

### TEN PENGUINS

- 181 AN INNKEEPER'S DIARY ..... John Pothargill  
182 NIGHT FLIGHT ..... Anatole de Saint-Baspiéry  
183 THE FIGHT OF THE HIREGAST ..... Alan Garbutt  
184 SELECTED STORIES OF 'SAKI'  
185 CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG MAN ..... George Moore  
186 PENDING APPOINTMENT ..... Norman Collins  
187 THE EGYPT'S GOLD ..... David Scott  
188 THE MURDER IN THE MAZE ..... J. J. Conington  
189 BUT NOT; WE ARE OBSERVED ..... Helene Balloz  
190 DEATH OF MY AUNT ..... G. H. S. Kinskin

### THREE SPECIALS

- BAITAIN ..... Max-Observation  
WHAT HITLER WANTS ..... E. G. Lorimer  
THEY BETRAYED CZECHOSLOVAKIA ..... G. J. George

Penguin and Pelican Specials are books which do not fit into the usual classified categories, being mostly new books specially written for the series on urgent topical problems of the day. These books are rushed through as soon as possible after delivery of the manuscript to us. A later page in this list gives a complete list of Specials published up to the end of 1938, but many new ones are scheduled for 1939. Ask your bookseller for a list of the latest additions.

# PENGUIN BOOKS

COMPLETE LIST OF PUBLICATIONS TO THE END OF 1938

## FICTION

average covers

"Bend Sinister"	A Tale Like
Arnold Bennett	Great Britain Year
Algernon Blackwell	The Centaur
Phyllis Bentley	Worlds Within
Marjorie Bowen	New Wine of Old Kind
Ernest Brown	Kat Longfellow's Hill Walk The Making of Kat Long Kat Long's Golden Hour
Ann Douglas	At the Point
David Dymally	The Strange Case of Miss Anne Spry
Ed. E. Evans	The Immigrants at the Port
J. L. Campbell	The Whirlwind of Fate
G. E. Channing	The Man Who Was Thursday
James Clavel	Madness, Crime New Land, New Wine
William Faulkner	Solitude? Play
R. H. French	A Passage to India
Lawrence Sanders	Can you Help
Elizabeth Goudon	The Book of Hours
Jackie Odgers	Gold Canyon Farm
John Galsworthy	Somerset (Night on the Greyhound)
Van Hay	A Solitary Match
Robert Hichens	(2 vols.) Remembrance Game
James Hilton	Crane of Redoubt
Constance Hinton	The Lonely People
Clara Hingst	Queen's Game Apple I Am Jonathan Sumner
W. W. Jacobs	Supper Without
M. R. James	Ghost Stories of an Antiquary
Stephen Leacock	Plumage
John Macdonald	Covered Table
Doris May	Crucible Street
Edith Maek	Children of the Earth Rugged Runners
R. M. Matheson	The Spanish Farm
Brinsford Mitchell	Self

Little of History

The Informer

W. Wilson Anderson (ed.)	Penguin Periodic (1) Penguin Periodic (2) Penguin Periodic (3) Penguin Periodic (4)
S. Arnold Butler-Lane	New Photographs of the World
V. Buckland-Woods	The Education of a Nation
Byronne, Stanley	Seven Feet Seven
Charles Caine	The A. Plan
Benjamin Katz Grynberg	North Side One
Edward H. Hulse	(2 vols.) Quest of Justice
James Hulse	Paradise
Charles Howard	Before the Revolution
Samuel Johnson and Sons	Some Experiments of an Englishman
John Galsworthy (ed.)	Selected Masters (18th Century) (1) Selected Masters (19th Century) (2)
John Galsworthy	The Unsettled Adventure
Robert L. Hulse	Tales from the Past
August Thierbach	With Goodwill
Edward Thompson	An English Day
Ben Tynan	A Garden in the Moon
Hugh Williams	Mr. Pen to and Mr. To
Lydia Townsend Warner	Little Willows
Ernest Wright	Black Birdie Dorothy and Fifi Vigilante
Edith Wharton	Edith Wharton
P. S. Woodhouse	My New Game
S. H. Young	William
Francis Brown Young	The Black Diamond The Gracious Man

## CRIME FICTION

green covers

Anthony Armstrong	The House of the Dead
H. C. Bailey	Mr. Arden, Arden
R. C. Bailey	Yew's Last Case
Anthony Berkeley	The Possibility Murder

(continued)



